

# THE LIVING AGE.

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## THE DARK ROAD.

Not in self-searching do I find  
The secrets of my heart and mind.

On bridges where the 'buses roll  
I trace the pattern of my soul.

In roaring wheel and screaming horn  
My greed sings out her chant forlorn.

Each thin face and hungry eye  
Reveals my inner poverty.

In dank gray beard and shaking head  
Lies my cherished beauty dead.

In that pale twisted child I see  
Upheld my own deformity.

In crumbling arch and mouldering  
stones  
I feel my jerry-built bones.

Then when at dusk I leave the town  
And find the earth in her green gown,

I meet my virtues one by one  
Standing in the evening sun.

In the song of the blackbird  
My own joy makes herself heard.

In the peace of eventide  
My soul's peace has found a bride.

At the table of yon star  
My hungry hopes well-feasted are,

When the moon gets up to shine  
The silvered glass she holds is mine!

And in the shadow of the wood  
Dreams my secret solitude.

But 'tis a little thing to find  
The secrets of my heart and mind.

There is Another I would know,  
From Whom I come, to Whom I go.

And not in any city street,  
And not in any country sweet,

Lies the dark road where neither star  
Nor sun nor moon nor lantern are,

Where Hope and Love are both un-  
known,  
And Faith must climb the steeps alone,

Where Faith goes weak as babe new-  
born,  
A thousand nights without a morn,

Naked, hungry, comfortless,  
And no man knows her deep distress:

God has shut His ears, His face  
Is turned from that fearful place.

This is the road a man must go  
If he would live and love and know,

This is the road he dare not shun  
If he would see the Holy One.

*Edith Anne Stewart.*

*The Nation.*

## AT MEMORY'S GATE.

Early and late  
I watch and wait  
At Memory's Gate.

As I peer through,  
Friends I once knew  
Throng the dim view.

Far down the way  
Wee children stray,  
And talk and play:  
They seem so near  
I almost hear  
The words they say—  
I know I trace  
Each tiny face.

O moments rare!  
Dear Vision fair!—  
Loved ones are there!

Some day, I know  
That I shall go  
To where they dwell—  
Till then?—Ah! well—  
Early and late  
I'll watch and wait  
At Memory's Gate.

*E. T. Sandford.*

*The Spectator.*

## DEMOCRACY AND THE PROLETARIAT.

Looking back through the centuries preceding the dawn of the nineteenth nothing strikes the student of history more forcibly than the difference in the conditions of proprietary interests in those days as compared with our own. The wealthy in the Middle Ages were the landowners, if we except a small body of Jews or the somewhat larger section of merchants, whose business consisted in the importation of foreign goods intended mainly for the consumption of the wealthy. The landowner was predominantly the wealthy man, and certainly the only man who wielded undisputed political power. In spite of gradual but substantial modifications brought about by such factors as the increase in population, the more complex needs of a growing civilization, and the progress of scientific discovery, this state of affairs may be said to have still been in existence at the commencement of the last century, at least in so far as political power was concerned. No one to-day would, I believe, contradict the statement that the paramount class in the political world during the first years of that century was that of the landowner.

It does not follow that at that period a very considerable and powerful manufacturing class had not arisen; it means no more than that the new body of capitalists had not yet turned to political account the power of their moneybags. In fact, it was not till the beginning of the nineteenth century that their own prodigious strength became revealed to themselves, and curiously enough only when in the process of meeting attacks by the landowning interests they were compelled to seek analogous political weapons. How efficacious were these weapons may be seen from what to our modern outlook would appear to

be the scandalous fiasco in 1808 of Sheridan's Bill to put some check upon the infamous system of child labor—a Bill which was openly and successfully represented as a sort of *lèse majesté* of the sacred right of property, and deserving of most vehement condemnation by all law-abiding persons. The success of this their first political sally might have done no more than subdue the arrogance of the landowning oligarchy, while leaving unimpaired the principle of government by which the upper and middle classes were to be rulers unhampered by the bulk of the nation, had it not been for the grotesquely exaggerated form of argument which the industrial politicians made use of. Their inhuman and merciless economical logic successfully routed the landowning interest, but not without giving rise to a side product destined in the course of time to alter the whole face of the political world. The florid speeches in defence of the right of property supposed to be under menace, the solemn protestations from prosperous gentlemen, culminating in a handsome presentation of plate to one member of Parliament who had specially distinguished himself in upholding the sacred right and securing the failure of the Bill, had the unforeseen result of opening the eyes of the disordered mass of human beings customarily designated the proletariat. The working man realized for the first time that, if he did not bestir himself in his own interest, no one else would.

Failing at the outset to comprehend the necessity of organized union, the working classes rushed blindly into promiscuous violence, and the riots of 1830 were the result; but, though the weapon was rude and blunt, it sufficed to intimidate Parliament, which proceeded in 1833 to render practical

the pious desire expressed in an Act passed in 1802.

It was after the passage of the 1833 measure that the conflict between the two great proprietary interests became acute. On the one side the industrial capitalists, then, as now, the mainstay of what has become modern Liberalism, partly in revenge for the attack on their interests embodied in the Act which had received the blessing of the landowning Tories, partly for the purpose of reducing the cost of living with an eye to a good opportunity of lowering wages, commenced the great agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws. Retaliatory measures on their opponents' side were soon forthcoming, and consisted in a vigorous attack on the scandalous oppression of labor exercised by the industrial capitalists. Neither party was in reality animated with a sense of philanthropy. Both realized that in the future power would lie with that political party that had the support of the newly awakened masses, and each in its own way determined to make a special appeal to them. It is well to remember this when we are tempted to point to our present legislation as the outcome of our superior civilization, or our Christianity, or our spotless morality. It was neither civilization, nor Christianity, nor morality, nor indeed any other sentiment poetic, prosaic, moral or religious, but purely the lust for party power, which led to the present measures protecting the proletariat. In the matter of child labor the beautiful lines recur to our minds:—

Travail mauvais qui prend l'âge tendre  
 en sa serre,  
 Qui produit la richesse en créant la  
 misère  
 Qui se sert d'un enfant ainsi que d'un  
 outil  
 . . . . .  
 Que ce travail, haï des mères, soit  
 maudit!

And if, after reading them, we recollect that it is to party gain alone that we owe the cleansing of that horrible stain on our national honor, we shall no longer sing peans to our high morality or to our noble Christianity. For should we not have been moral always? And have we not been Christians for sixteen hundred years? Yet has not legislation of this kind been made to wait till the pressure of political gain made it expedient in the nineteenth century?

History tells us that at that period "cheap" food furnished the favorite Liberal-industrial battle-cry: while redress for the oppressed millions of workers was the loudly-expressed desire of every Tory politician. Thus the capitalists and the landowners warred upon each other; and in this fruitful conflict of the gods the humble men and women of England gained. The masses, indeed, once their blindness had passed away, were not slow to recognize the true motives of the conflict, in which they stood to gain whichever the victorious party might be. A short time sufficed to bring home abundantly to them that they were no more than a tool liable at any moment to be discarded. Their political power, no doubt, was great, for they were dispensers of victory or defeat, but transient, because they initiated no policy of their own beyond the elementary one of wresting somehow from the richer classes a right to live. Each man thought for himself, and organization was unknown.

But there was a grand opportunity before them. The split in the wealthy class gave them time calmly to consider the situation, while their sudden rise to importance inspired them with courage and enthusiasm. As disordered masses they were powerless to act unless the opportunity was deliberately afforded by the great parties; but once united, with a fixed and



logical policy, they could afford to defy the older parties, make their own opportunities, and become a weighty factor in English politics. Large bodies of workers, comprising the bulk but not the whole of the industrial proletariat, secured union and cohesion; and, aided by an extended franchise, a strong and permanent political element came into being,—an element holding the balance of power of which it will never be divested until the day arrives if it ever will, when Democracy as a method of government is abandoned. From then till now no party could govern without the support of these bodies, a support which is given to that party in preference to the other, according to the working man's conception of his own greater advantage.

While the largest portion of the proletariat was forming itself into an all-powerful political weapon, the industrial capitalist party was forced to submit to a change in its methods, or in the alternative relegate itself to perpetual obscurity. All the earlier measures of Labor Reform had originated from the Tories, who had placed them on the Statute Book in the teeth of the determined opposition of the industrial capitalists. It was natural that the masses should lend their support to the Tories, to whom they looked for further relief from the tyranny of the employer class. It became obvious that unless their opponents changed their policy, or at least their tactics, they could no longer hope for power. Consequently they adopted the same methods as the Tories, and asserted their desire to improve the lot of the working man in every possible way, confining, needless to say, their efforts as far as practicable to those measures which would injure their rivals without seriously affecting themselves.

Superficially the result was highly edifying, and eminently soothing to the

kind-hearted man who had not the ability to criticize too deeply. The innocent moralist of to-day might think that the land was indeed a happy one when all parties were so eager to remedy their past neglect of the condition of the poor. But, even forgetting the motives of party gain which were the fountain-head from which flowed all these noble efforts, there is little ground for congratulation. It would be an outrageous optimist who could sincerely think that, bad though the motives were, the results have been wholly satisfactory, when he is confronted with the sad fact that relief has been granted with a free hand to the politically powerful sections of labor, while it is even now mercilessly withheld from the weaker ones.

## II.

We are by long tradition so accustomed to couple Democracy with every forward step in the bettering of the lot of the poorer classes, and in fact with every salutary reform, that we are apt to neglect any critical study conducive to discovering the real causes which have given such beneficent results. As soon as a measure, probably centuries overdue, has removed some glaring evil, we congratulate ourselves with fulsome reiteration on our happy state of freedom and of true Democracy. We listen with avidity to the plaudits that come from oversea, which still more impress us with our own superiority, and the last thing we would think of doing is to examine dispassionately how far our vaunted Democracy has been instrumental in effecting the needed change. We have seen how two factors have combined to obtain a measure of relief for the toilers; the organization of the working classes and the conflict of proprietary interests; but we have not investigated which of these had the greater dynamic power.

At very much the same period as our own Act of 1833 an important law was promulgated in France—that of March 22, 1841—which did much to counteract the tyranny of French employers. Whatever the causes may have been which led up to the passage of this law, they were certainly not democratic in character considering the practically autocratic rule of Louis Philippe, under whose ægis it appeared. But, under the sort of Imperial-Socialist Government of Napoleon III., practically nothing was ever accomplished, while M. Rouher exhibited on occasions considerable harshness to workers who petitioned or agitated for changes. Choosing a notoriously absolute government—that of Russia—we are astounded at the elaboration of laws and regulations intended for the protection of the industrial workers. So much so that a few years ago M. Nowosselski, then Syndic of Odessa, solemnly declared that the best form of government which could cope with the greed and cruelty of employers was the autocratic government of his country, and as evidence he pointed triumphantly to the state of Russian legislation. Italy, a country wholly governed democratically for over forty years, shows no signs of fruitful legislation, while the workers are groaning under a most despotic tyranny on the part of their employers. The daily hours of labor are frequently fifteen, and women and children are sweated in the most systematic and cold-blooded way. A report from the Municipal Council of the Sicilian town of Caltanissetta declares that the conditions of child labor in the sulphur mines is heartrending. Children are largely employed in conveying the sulphur to the pit mouth. They are always overloaded, are beaten mercilessly, and, if in the opinion of the overseers they are too slow in mounting

the steep ladders with heavy loads on their backs, persuasion takes the form of the flame of an oil lamp applied to their bare legs. Let us, in respect of what is happening in Italy, remember two facts. In that country the politically strongest proprietary interest is still the ownership of land, and consequently there has been as yet no fight for power between that interest and industrial capital. Secondly, bad as are the conditions of Italian labor to-day, they do not approach the infamy of our own treatment of the workers at the commencement of last century. For what terrible sufferings must have caused the not infrequent suicides of children under ten years of age? What must have been the conditions of child labor in our midst, when barely fifteen per cent of the children so worked ever reached the age of thirty?

Let us now ask ourselves frankly the question whether in this country Democracy has been the instrument of mercy. We will concede that the direct political power acquired under Democracy by the organized laboring classes has greatly helped them to realize material advantages, but we must not forget that the initial movement was begun by something totally different, viz., the conflict of proprietary interests at a time when both through lack of organization and of the franchise the masses had no political power whatever. I maintain that this war of the wealthy still at this day gives the needful impetus to social legislation, and that if, by a series of what appear to be impossible circumstances, the wealthy were amalgamated in one party, all the political weapons of the masses would be powerless to further labor reforms. From the point of view of practical politics, their finances would not stand the strain of a fight with the rich; they would be at a loss to find sufficient

candidates; those found would be unable to agree on a fixed and all-embracing policy; while, as a matter of life or death, the workers could be brought to subjection by the wealthy by the simple expedients of lockouts or the other ordinary methods of coercion. A Labor Government in this country is unthinkable, because capital—land and money acting together against the common foe—is prodigiously and overwhelmingly powerful, and, above all, fully capable of asserting its power. On the other hand, if one could imagine the workers once more disorganized and franchiseless masses, it would by no means follow that social legislation would be arrested, provided the beneficial jealousies between the wealthy classes remained as vigorous as now. The very desire to strike at each other would prompt one or the other class to propose legislation bearing on labor problems, and we should witness not only no arrest but a continual flow of legislation not dissimilar, if perhaps less rapid, than what is at present occurring.

But where Democracy is found to be fundamentally wanting, and where a wise autocracy would seem most capable of salutary action, is in the process of distribution of reforms. The single action of internecine strife amongst the wealthy may determine reforms in a haphazard way according to their damaging character to one of the other party, but the supervening element of political power in the organized masses has stereotyped the methods and objects of all reforms. Formerly a reform was judged to be useful and practical by the party in power when in the course of relieving the workers it inflicted a heavy blow on the party in opposition; now, in addition to this qualification, it must mean the purchase of the allegiance of the section of workers who benefit. Obviously,

therefore, the result has been that the better organized, the better paid—consequently the politically stronger—section secures its reforms in preference to the less fortunate sections. Here, then, the collective mind of Democracy works inversely to the dictates of common sense that rule the wise man's conduct. The maxim of the greater evil receiving first treatment is abandoned.

The most recent of social reforms, the National Insurance Act, is a typical example of this democratic blunder, for it is notorious that under that Act those who need most get least, while the strongly organized trades, where also high wages are paid, are able to avail themselves of an extended and beneficial system of unemployment insurance. Shortly, no doubt, agrarian legislation will add another example, as both parties seem intent on capturing the powerful agricultural vote, and both see a method of obtaining a reform which at the same time inflicts a blow on their opponents. It is true that agricultural labor lacks organization, but this defect is made up by its enormous territorial distribution and by the comparative simplicity of the remedies demanded.

Meanwhile, while these fortunate sections gain or will gain in the near future, nothing is said about the conditions of badly remunerated labor in other spheres; nothing is attempted to remedy the wholesale sweating of women; little practical is done about the abominable Poor Law system. The reason is simple enough: the great parties have no political power to reckon with, and no gain to look forward to. Individual effort on the part of the good-hearted private member is received with hypocritical sympathy; is accorded, perhaps, a second reading, and promptly relegated to limbo. Ministers will loudly declare their profound agreement with the principle,

but will regret that Parliamentary time is not available. Nothing is gained, nothing is done, nobody benefits, except perhaps the good-hearted member who secures a mild press advertisement and possesses a genial subject for platform talk in his constituency.

One can imagine an autocrat dealing very differently with the problem of the relief of the unprotected masses. It needs no violent mental effort to conceive a ruler who would come to the rescue of the weakest among his subjects with the same ardor as inspired his work in other directions; who would have the strength to rise above the distinctions which distorted the outlook of the more fortunate among his subjects; who would temper the winds of the sordid struggle for existence to the needs of the scantily equipped. We are told that such a man can never be found. Perhaps that is an exaggeration. Possibly it is more accurate to say that, because strong and good men are rare and life is finite, such men cannot always be found. Anyhow, we need not attempt to settle which is true, and we may dispense with further discussion of a proposal which is commonly conceived to be utopian, without, however, surrendering our right to discuss the demerits of Democratic Government.

If we consent to look at our present system of government with the eyes of impartial critics, we must perforce set down on the side of shortcomings that the country is as a matter of fact governed exclusively by the monied classes. It is all very well to say that every member of the Commons is elected by the people. So he is. But it is equally true that the people of a particular district have, as a rule, to choose between two men—both belonging to the upper or middle classes, both provided with a sufficiency of property, both pledged to

their respective parties' policies—and are unable to seek their representative elsewhere. It is idle to retort that any person within the law's definition is eligible; for one cannot stand for Parliament without money to compensate the loss of earning power after election, besides previously having provided for the outrageous election expenses. Nor are these the only disadvantages; for one cannot appeal successfully to a large constituency without the organized publicity and the essential help afforded by local associations affiliated to the great parties. Take a starving man to a food store; tell him he can choose anything he pleases provided he does not exceed the sum of one penny in his purchase. He will have a choice among several things costing that sum; but when he has chosen his pennyworth it is false to assert that his hunger is appeased in the manner he most wished for. His hunger, probably, is only partially satisfied, and the palliative was not to his liking. His limited choice was exercised, but his heart was set on something widely different and carefully withheld from him. Thus it is with the working-man elector, who is asked to choose between two candidates who only differ in the matter of allegiance to their respective parties, the latter the close allies of capitalistic interests.

English democratic government consists in government of the poor by the rich in the interests primarily of the rich, and only for the benefit of the poor when it suits the interests of the rich to dole out relief. Crude this description may be, but none the less true. And, when we once more look back on the gradual protection which has been grudgingly granted by the capitalist classes, the violence of that fruitful internal strife in the ranks of the rich appears as the work of an

all-seeing Providence. Moreover, we shall become convinced that it is the only stable factor from which, under any form of government with the sole exception of a wise autocracy, reforms may spring. The condition of this nation will become grave indeed if the day ever shall come when the rich will present a united front to the remainder of their fellow-countrymen. That day would mark the end of all social regeneration and would usher in an epoch when the sufferings of the present-day oppressed will be doubly intensified, and even the existing protective measures will be in constant jeopardy. The rich would in all things prevail, and no check, even of the type exemplified by the French Revolution, would have any but a purely temporary effect. And this dreadful state of affairs would be happening under the rules of the vaunted democratic system, which would be powerless to provide safeguards against the consummation of the evil.

Can the working classes, then, still consider Democracy the infallible panacea when its action is entirely subordinated to that potentially changeable factor, discord among the dominant classes? Surely that child-like, time-revered faith in its efficacy will be shattered; or at least, if it should not die—because ancient dogmatic belief dies hard—it will be roughly shaken. There is, however, little use in laboring the deficiencies of Democracy. They cannot be remedied

*The British Review.*

except by sweeping away the whole system. But there is only one form of government which in theory might replace it with completely satisfactory results, and that, we are told, is in practice an impossibility. We are told even more, that any one advancing such a proposal would be listened to with as much respect as would be afforded to a raving lunatic. So with deep reluctance we must take for granted that the democratic system is not to be uprooted, and that this clumsy and deficient medium is to remain everlastingly.

But we must not for that lose all hope of further reforms.

Victor Hugo, in a nobly inspired passage, has described how Satan, having seized all that was beautiful and sublime in creation, produced from its manipulation nothing but an ugly spider. But the light of the Almighty shone upon that spider, which grew lustrous and great, until it was converted into the sun from which all life derives. So may it be with this nation. English democratic government and the forces that drive it are monstrous monuments of man's callous indifference to the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. But the light may shine, and then, in spite of the worship of the false god Democracy, the hideousness will vanish, the suffering will be relieved, and this great land will be at last purified of the immemorial injustices which darken its fair name.

*Adrian Dingli.*

## A WELSH WALK.

I had it in my mind to visit the house of my Fairy Godmother at Llanfairfechan in the middle of last winter. There was plenty of time, so I said I would walk. I was at Leominster. The distance was roughly

110 miles, so I allowed four days. My armament was a rucksack and a light cane walking-stick.

On this morning that I sallied forth, the lowlands were gray with mist, and a cold sleet-rain was blowing from the



east. No morning, I thought, for any sort of passenger but a walker. I took my way through Leominster town, and then up north, skirting the wonderful old village of Kingsland, where Merewald, son of great Penda, the pagan king of Mercia, lies buried under a wooded mound. It was this same Merewald, called The Lion, who founded the old priory church of Leominster. On my right I passed the monument which commemorates the battle of Mortimer's Cross, and a little further on I came to a fork in the roads where was a mighty old oak, marked in my map as "Battle Oak." I always think that people, no matter how "up to date," who live on the site of great deeds of the past, must almost by virtue of the air they breathe and the soil they sleep over have some mystic link with things of the old time. So, making the rain my excuse, I entered the little cottage that stood by the ancient tree. At first the old lady who lived there and received me very kindly would talk of nothing but her ailments and the virtues of her deceased husband, and when I referred to the oak, told me how boys were not allowed to throw stones at it, and how they always did. Then all of a sudden she said, "Do you know what the name of this cottage is, sir?"

"No," said I.

"It is called Blue Mantle Cottage," said she, "because when the big battle was fought between here and the Ambray and Shobdon Hill yonder, a man in a blue mantle jumped into yon tree and preached a sermon or summat!"

I incline to the "summat" rather than the sermon, but what was the significance of the blue mantle? The road continued level, though hills rose darkly through the rain on either side, and the ancient earthworks of Croft Ambray frowned almost sheer above the way. At Wigmore I came to another halt, and entered an inn for

some bread and cheese. Here was nothing remarkable. Three men sat over their mugs inveighing against the weather, and a gramophone snarled dance-music from a neighboring apartment. Leaving Wigmore I came on a sudden in sight of the castle. Here was the keynote of the place. When I saw the ruins of this grim fortress lifted up apart on the high hillside, in stately and solemn retirement, I felt the grip of old times. I felt the thrill of the old terror of the name of Mortimer go through me, and the name of Wigmore, which a few moments before had only suggested beer and gramophones, now stood out in red letters in my mind with that sublimeness of gloom that a boy knows when in some old history book he turns up the picture of an execution. "Yes, I am Wigmore," the old horned remnants seemed to say. "I am the old dead tree, yon poverty-stricken hovels are but the withering parasites that lived on me in my glory, and use my name now, but have not of my sustenance." Rain and mist! wonderful things for lending that note of the morbid and the mysterious to things that have been.

I was now bound for Bucknell. There was a footpath to be found somewhere, and at last I struck it. I had better have kept to the road, for it led over ploughed fields, where I was presently almost over boot-top at every step. And now great ragged coiling clouds came sailing over the hill right ahead, dropping long sweeping tresses that gradually hid the landscape between me and them. There was a lull in the wind and rain for about two seconds, then it came on to blow what sailors would call "a regular buster," and down tore the hail right in my face. I had just got to where there were two or three trees, so I crept up behind an old oak. Both wind and hail went on increasing with

terrific violence, twigs and dead leaves rushed past me in a headlong course, and other things seemed out of mere madness to shoot up into the air and spin a dance. Suddenly there was a noise like a gun and then a splash of broken twigs. A big bough of one of the trees had carried away, and now lay not twenty yards from me with half its bulk lolling on the fence. Like the ancient gods of wrath appeased with sacrifice the storm seemed to have marked its victim, for the wind began to drop as suddenly as it had sprung up, and all at once the whole of the hail, like a great curtain, swept away, and I watched it hurrying off under its weird tossing clouds. But its brief passage had improved neither the ploughed lands nor my temper, so I fell into harmony with creation, and was at wrath with myself and all things. In this frame of mind I had soon stalked savagely to the end of the sloppy-footpath and put myself into full swing on the highroad with all the force of the rage that possessed me. In Brampton Brian I passed the largest yew-hedge I had ever seen. Its great mass quaked and shuddered in what of the blast still blew, and I knew that behind its deep lugubrious folds it hid another remnant of the Mortimers. As I crossed the young Teme and entered Bucknell the rain drew off, and in an instant, such is Nature's high art, I had forgotten the bad weather and my wet things, and was rejoicing in the sparkling freshness that thrilled the air of evening. At Bucknell I entered a little inn and ordered tea in the bar parlor. There were four men assembled here, of whom I began to inquire the shortest way to Clun, for though I could spy it out well enough on my map I am always pleased to hear a local direction,—it is something to bear in one's mind afterwards when one is on a lonely way. These good people, after

holding a conclave, told me there was no short cut worth speaking of, and started to instruct me how to follow round by the big road. This they did out of sheer humanity, being assured that I should lose my way in the dark among by-lanes, for country folk have no faith in a map. "Now," said I, "I will tell you how I should go." Then I described my short cut by the map, telling them the houses I would pass and their names, the orchards, the streams, the turns in the road, and the hills. They looked on rather surprised. Then I made a lucky hit. "When I win round this corner," I said, "I shall see the light of Pentre Hodre farm right on ahead about half a mile." I might have been possessed with a devil, so much were they struck with this information; but it loosened their tongues, and they told me most interesting things about the way which afterwards, though it was pitch-dark and I could not see, kept my thoughts in the right atmosphere of the place where I was.

When I walked from Bucknell it was dusk, except for the keen gray lights that lay all along under the heavy clouds in the West. Presently I turned off the main road, and got on to a lane that led steep up. I know of no vehicle that gives me any pleasure to go uphill in. When a horse is in the matter I feel for it, and so I do for a motor, or a steam-engine when it is hard put to, and as for hill-climbing on a bicycle, I know nothing more miserable. But I love a good stout hill to walk up. Deep-set in human nature is a wonderful link to Mother Earth. With some it is even a yearning. So it is with me when I walk. I feel that there is nothing worth speaking of between me and my beloved element, and I feel content at night to be tired because the Earth has made me so, and to have had pleasure because the Earth and I have made it together.

After I had pushed on some way and passed that turn I had described to the men in the inn, and again the light in the farm half a mile distant, the lane became steeper and more rough, and I knew that I must be ascending the brow marked on the map with the weird and stirring name of "The Fiddler's Elbow." It was an upland plateau, and was so dark when I got to its level that there was scarcely enough light to show in the long streaky puddles that lay on the track. There was plenty of wind up here, and the air was wonderfully fresh and sweet, so that I could tell by the smell of it that there was common and heathy land down to the left, and up on the right I could hear the roaring of pine-trees. In such weather at such a time there is no doubt that The Fiddler's Elbow is very awesome and lonesome and haunted. I must confess I was not sorry when I came at last upon the glimmer of a cottage. Just at that moment it began to pour heavily, and as it had only the appearance of a shower I resolved to take shelter. There were several cottages together here. To one of them I went and knocked. I could hear the loud voice of a woman issuing orders within, and in a moment the door was opened by a very ugly boy; he stooped his head at me as people do when looking from light to dark, rather like an old fowl when you disturb him at roost by night.

"It's the Curate!" he said, and slammed the door in my face. While I was wondering why on the one hand I should have deserved this title, and on the other what the Curate should have deserved to have the door shut in his face, the portal was opened again, and this time by one of the prettiest little girls I have ever seen. She likewise bobbed her head at me as her brother had done.

"No, it isn't!" she said, and shut the

door again with a bang. As I was debating whether to let another member of the family come and inspect me after this fashion, I heard the voice of the woman raised in command again. The door instantly flew open and brother and sister regarded me in silence. So I went in, and making my excuses, sat down by a large open fire and began to fondle a kitten. The family appeared either to be or have been at a meal. There was a dear old man sitting hard by the coast of the table, where he seemed to hover between lighting a pipe and finishing the last morsel of his tea. The lady who owned the voice, and whose face was good-humored but rather hard, was striding about making remarks which comprehended us all. The ugly boy had retired to the farthest corner and was observing me intently between the swelling profiles of two robust ornaments. The little girl alone continued to eat and drink. Then she got up suddenly and said, "Thank you for my good tea." This must have been a grace, and I think a most charming one. When the old gentleman had got his pipe under way he began to discourse on rheumatics and the state of the weather, till his wife shot into the conversation like a torrent of hail, explaining to me why I had been mistaken for the Curate. Through every little rift that occurred in this downpour the old man went on telling me his tale of woe, even if it was a matter of two words only. But I heeded neither of them, being busy making friends with the ugly boy who had sneaked from his hiding-place and come up beside me.

"Have a cup of tea," whispered the little girl to the kitten. "Or a glass of cider," suggested the ugly boy, turning his back on me and frowning across at a pleasing likeness of Moses and Aaron.

"Leave the gentleman alone, Elsie!

Stop thy clatter, Jack," cried the lady, and then in the same breath to me—"Won't you take a cup of tea, sir? or a glass of cider?" But even this official invitation I must refuse, knowing that it was time to be on my way again. So I went forth of that cottage into the night and rain, wonderfully refreshed. For coming as a guest in the dark to share for a few moments the simple communion of a family life, being a stranger whose name they know not (and you know not theirs), coming into close contact with lives you had never thought on before; or travelling in the darkness through a country you cannot see and which you have not much at heart, and then mingling with people to whom this spot is all the world and finding there love and hospitality, gives one a sense of something that I have called refreshment, knowing, however, that it is a feeble term for what I mean.

That night I slept in Clun.

The morning was a splendid contrast to the day before. The sun was shining in a blue sky, and each object was doing its utmost to spell out every scrap of color it could. I was on the march by half-past seven, taking the way which leads by lanes across country and over the hills to the town of Montgomery. The outlook began to be much more interesting than the day before, and the clear air, and the bright freshness of everything, made it seem worth while to have had a wet day. But on a sudden it came on to snow. This was only a fit, however, and when the cloud had blown over the sky was as clear as before.

I passed through Mainstone. After this I followed a footpath winding round the base of a hill. It made itself the boundary between wood and meadow, and was very generous of spring and freedom to the foot after the road. The country here was pretty but rather uneventful. Finding the

road again I proceeded about half a mile, when suddenly, like the shifting of a great transformation scene, I came face to face with a most astounding view. River, plain, and mountain were ranged in stately fashion before my eyes, as if they had sprung from nowhere. Once, when in the high latitudes, I looked up to find a certain star, the whole heavens burst into flaming torrents and cataracts of aurora borealis, and my breath was taken as if by a blow. And now I felt something of the same sensation at this sudden transition from a dull outlook to a splendid far-reaching prospect. This is how it had come about. I was on much higher land than I had thought. The place was really a lumpy sort of table-land, and now I had come to its limit, where it terminated in a bank that sloped away steeply to a great alluvial plain, which is the end of the valley of the Severn. But without knowing that I was on the verge of anything particular I came round a corner which was hedged high, and there the road changed its direction and branched to left and right, for this was the top of the bank and here was the view. Down below stretched this beautiful plain, miles away to the north, and on either hand rose the hills whose summits all, and whose flanks in part, were white with snow.

By means of taking sights on my marching compass I identified these hills on my map, and most of the villages, streams, and roads that dotted themselves and threaded themselves over the face of the lovely plain. I could also see the town of Montgomery—whither I was bound—some six miles to the left, under a steady haze of smoke. Then I got on my way again. Presently I met a man going in the same direction as myself, so I slackened my pace and we fell to talking. When I told him I was bound

for Wales, he said he should feel it a privilege to see me over the border. The border was not more than half a mile from here. Then we passed through a breach in Offa's dyke. "That was built by the Devil," he said, "and it is one of the proofs that the Devil is a very strong man." For he told me that himself and his father and his father's father, and for aught he knew his father's father's great-grandfather, had spent much of their time trying to dislodge a portion of the dyke from their estate. Not only had they found this task impossible, but also very disheartening. For the man assured me that when the Devil was not over-pressed with business elsewhere he would visit this spot, and lo! when you woke up in the morning you found a patch had grown where at least two generations had spent their energy. So we came to the border, which is on a little bridge, and while I stepped over into Wales he remained in England, and we shook hands and parted.

I love Wales, and I always feel a thrill of keen pleasure when I find myself there again. But to walk into Wales is much more exciting and much more delightful than any other way of approaching the land of lovely scenery and lovely voices—except no doubt to ride there on horseback.

Montgomery is a finely situated town. Above its clustered houses beetles a tremendous crag whose aspect is black and lowering and dark with overhanging vegetation. On the summit the ruins of some ancient fortress still remain, and a gigantic earth-work made by the Roman, the Briton, or perhaps the Devil himself, completes a picture which makes one feel as one approaches it the peculiar atmosphere created by an old romantic ballad whose theme is love, but whose chiming refrain tolls out persistently the note of tragedy. Perhaps the

name has something to do with this—that is, when the name is pronounced properly, giving the o's the same value as in the word London. I cannot imagine that the impression would be the same if it were known as Brown's Town or Jones's City. But you say to yourself as you draw nigh, "I am walking into Montgomery," and the name flashes out like fire from a gloomy bloodstone. Among other superstitions and old-wives' fables I firmly believe that there is a very great deal in a name. I think names affect one's life as much as any other sort of environment, and more, because this environment is always with us. There is color and spirit in a name that must affect the bearer of it. For instance, I would call Roger and Margaret red names, Alice a blue name, Edwin a white one, and Lucy a rich buttercup yellow. I should be very much surprised to see a Roger behave like an Edwin or a Reginald like a William. And so surely as I believe this, do I with consistency believe that a name affects not only a place and its people but a nation and its hordes.

Entering a small sweet-shop which called itself a cyclist's rest, I asked the stout lady who came to bid me welcome if I could have a cup of tea and some bread and butter. She again told me "Welcome," and by the pleasant bright way she said it I knew without doubt that I was in Wales. Then she showed me into a little room furnished up to the hilt, the chairs stified with antimacassars and the shelves gorged with ornaments. This sort of apartment always defeats my courage. "May I have tea in your kitchen, ma'am?" said I, recalling mine hostess. "Yes, welcome," she said in a soft, pretty way, as a cow might answer if you asked leave to come into her shippon.

While my little meal was being prepared I went to visit the church, shod



only with felt slippers, as I had sent my boot to a doctor of neat's leather in the town. The church is very fine. There is a beautiful rood screen and miserere stalls and an interesting effigy to a dependant of Queen Elizabeth. Outside in the churchyard is "The Robber's Grave." Tradition says that who lies within was an innocent man hanged for theft. On the scaffold he called God to witness that he was innocent. "And if so be that I lie not," he cried, "let no grass ever grow upon my grave." A rose-tree is growing there now, and in the green sod a cross has long ago been cut, and in it no grass grows.

In the kitchen of the sweet-shop I found mine hostess had an elder sister more portentous in dimensions than herself, who was addressed as Sister Anne. The old mother was there also, and a bashful young wench of about fourteen years. For the first five minutes there was a grim silence, during which I drank tea and studied the map and said nothing, and all the other eyes in the room were turned solemnly upon me. Then there was that sort of a murmur that the beginning of a shower makes upon a window-pane. Then it arose again and died. And yet again, and now they were all in full swing talking Welsh.

"No," said Sister Anne, "I am sure he is a cyclist."

"He has left a pack in the front room," said Sister Jane. "I think he must have things to sell."

"A pedlar does not go about in carpet slippers," said the little girl.

"And a cyclist does not ask to come into the kitchen," said the old lady in the chimney corner.

"Both your surmises are wrong," said I in English. "I neither pedal wares nor wheels." This remark they did not understand, nor did they pay much heed to it, being dumbfounded that I could understand Welsh. For

the Welsh, unlike any other nation of my acquaintance, hate it that an Englishman should know a word of their language. When I was a boy they would teach me their ancient tongue readily enough, because I suppose they did not think I should take it seriously. But I have great difficulty in learning from them now.

Day was declining when I left Montgomery, and as I got down to the level of the river Severn and crossed it, darkness was come. As soon as I could see the North Star I stopped and corrected the magnetic variation of my compass by it. Then I came to a place called Berriew, where I decided to halt for refreshment. Upon that I went to an inn and asked if I could have a poached egg and a cup of tea. The landlord was a jolly man, but he showed me into a most dismal state apartment, and lit a solitary lamp in the middle of it. However, this place filled my heart with cold comfort, so I asked the jolly landlord if I might not have my meal in the kitchen. "I am very sorry, sir," said he, "but the children are having a bath there."

"Never mind," said I. "I shall ask them riddles and fill them with courage for their aquatics while I eat." So this came about, and a very jolly meal I had in the steam and the laughter of the little lads.

The maid who brought me my meal asked me whether I proposed to visit Bala. I told her I hoped to be there the following night. She asked me if I would have the kindness to go and stay with her aunt, who kept a little temperance hotel there. I told her that I would endeavor to do myself the honor. So she wrote down the name of the inn.

When I got away it was very dark and still another hour to moonrise. Though my direction took me now through lanes, the way was not very easy to find, as there were

so many turnings and little cross-roads. The moon was up by now and all the fields were white with it. This, and the eerie feeling that no doubt the fairies were abroad and close to if I could only see them, made me feel as fresh and merry as if I had not walked a mile.

I entered the inn at Castle Caer Elnion, and after talking to the men who were gathered in the bar till the time limit I went to bed.

I got away from Castle Caer Elnion at about half-past six. It was a bright jolly morning. There had been a frost, and a film of snow had fallen, and now lay on the road and on the hedges and house-roofs. The air was fresh and free and nimble, and the measured ring of a smith's hammer across the silent morning seemed to strike the right note of the moment. Soon I came to a stone bridge that crossed the river Vyrnwy, and then I entered the pretty valley of that river. Here lies a most remarkable stretch of straight road, at the end of which one finds the pretty little village called Pont Robert. Here on sighting an inn and three exceedingly bonny girls standing in front of it, I bent my steps there to ask the way, because there was a hiatus in my maps between this place and Llanwddyn. But the three bonny girls seemed rather to enjoy some joke about me than to show much promise of guidance. However, after they had all inquired the way of each other and then asked it of me, and then discovered they did not know it, one of them went into the house and brought out their sire the landlord. He was very cheerful and very polite, and told me that he was considered the best fisherman in North Wales, and that I should not be able to find my way to Llanwddyn. I told him that not only to Llanwddyn was I going that day but even to Bala. But he shook his head at the trees on the opposite hill and laughed me

to scorn with great show of wisdom.

Anyhow, he very kindly gave me most minute directions of how I might reach the next village of Dolanog, which I set down in my pocket-book, and then took my leave. Crossing the river again I started climbing the opposite hill. When I had ascended through several steep fields and gone up a little lane I bore to the right, and came out on to a broad common which was a table-land. Up here the snow was lying ankle-deep, and I began to wonder what it would be like on the mountains which I must cross before my journey's end. The edge of this common follows the course of the Vyrnwy, the river roaring far down on my right in the sheer confines of the shaggy wooded valley. The sky overhead was of the blue that colors steel when it is being tempered, and made me think again of snow and the Welsh mountains.

Following my directions I eventually came to Dolanog. There was a combined shop and post office here, which I entered, and asked the post-mistress if she could give me a cup of tea, whereupon she most obligingly said she could. My first act was to purchase a thing that is really an abomination unto me, namely, a pictorial post-card. This miserable device for distorting people's impressions of rural England is only fit to be trafficked in by those who aver that they can see the country from a motor-car. For the flat anæmic landscapes and dull buildings and hideous streets these things wear upon their faces, without life or light or perspective or atmosphere, are the exact replica of the impressions one records in one's mind of the country when travelling in a motor-car, or still more when driving one. Of all the ugly children that that hag Mrs. Camera is mother to, I think the ugliest are the pictorial post-cards and the Picture Palace. And so having

bought one of these and thereto a half-penny stamp, I began to make friends with the little post-misses and post-masters, of whom there were a great number. I do not remember whether anybody under this hospitable roof spoke English, but it made a great and favorable impression on my mind that all the children had Welsh names. And beautiful names they were (when pronounced aright). There was a Goronwy and an Elvart and a Gladys, and an Anwyl Daveis (Dear Daveis by interpretation), and a young ruddy-cheeked swashbuckler who delighted in the swashbuckling name of Rhywallon Llewelyn and more—but I must mention yet another, it struck me as so beautiful, Lili Blodyn (Lily flower).

And now the tea was brewed, and lo! what a spread. There were cakes and oatcake, and honey and jam and bread and butter, and buttered scones and tea. When I had partaken, I asked what I might pay for my festivity, including my halfpenny stamp and my penny pictorial post-card. The good lady considered a while and then said, "Would threepence be too much?" "No," said I, "I think it is exceedingly moderate, but for the sake of the pretty names of your children I will pay you sixpence, if I may." The master of the house was away. Of this I was very sorry, because his books were so interesting. I think, considering the size of the library, which was a cupboard with glass doors, I have never seen so large a field of information covered by so few books. There were books on all sorts of subjects in Welsh and English, from Art to Arctic Exploration.

But a bad thing had befallen without while I was within,—it had come on to snow heavily. The track that I had to follow now was an exceedingly rough one. I continued a long way over desolate uplands—the snow get-

ting worse—till at last from the top of a brow I caught sight of the telegraph poles of the big road which I had heard at Dolanog I should soon cross.

Now when I am walking I always like to keep in touch with three things. First, my position on the map; secondly, a sort of general feeling and knowledge of the place I am travelling through, to provide if possible an atmosphere for my spirit to dwell in (else what is the use of travelling?); and thirdly, the people. It is a great thing to carry away a voice from the place you pass through. Often after a long tramp I can remember nothing for a while but the many voices and the pretty eyes of the children I have talked to. For, after all, when you take a long walk, what is it but that you are making to yourself a sort of pot-pourri whose fragrance remains in your memory, to be drawn upon at any time whatsoever in your after-life—for only those things that are pleasant remain, and the others, like weeds, having no part or harmony with the rest, quickly disappear. And the most valuable ingredients of your pot-pourri shall be the voices and eyes of children.

So now, almost at the same time as I hove in sight of the main road, I also hove in sight of a boy standing at a cottage door. He had bright blue eyes and a freckled face and rich fiery hair. He grinned as I passed, which, I thought, might be a sign of intelligence. Anyhow, I was determined to come into touch with the voice of this desolate upland, so, for want of something to say, I asked him how far it was to the big road (I judged it to be three-quarters of a mile).

"How far is it to the big road?"

"The Turpick road?"

"Yes."

"Nine miles."

"Nine miles! Why, look, lad, it lies yonder, right there!"

"Yes."

"How far is it, then?"

"Nine miles."

"How old are you?"

"Thirteen."

"Have you ever been to the turnpike road?"

"No."

"Good gracious! Why not?"

"I go to school *that* way."

"Were you born here?"

"Yes."

"Then the next fine day you walk to the turnpike road and back, and if you can prove that it is eighteen miles I will send you five shillings by return of post, and we'll go into the world together and make our fortunes."

After the turnpike road came a long weary ascent and more open country. The snow held off for a few minutes, and then came on again worse than ever. At last I got to a very steep descent, and all in a minute—it seemed—I was right in the thick of the hills. I say it seemed a sudden event, because, although the road had been very hilly all the way from Dolanog, the outlook from it was dull and plain as far as I could see—which was only a little distance, on account of the snow. Well, it was only another two miles to Llanwddyn, now on the highroad, which I had just rejoined. But two miles on a highroad in snow is far more dull than twenty miles on a rough track under any conditions. However, I overcame the spirit of monotony by completing the distance with a telegraph boy who was returning to Llanwddyn. The sight of his easy walking refreshed me, for boys born and bred in the hill country always know how to walk. It was getting dusk now. After bidding him farewell I took the path which led to the big hotel, which is one of those enormous edifices, like the railway hotels of Ireland, which perch themselves and all their luxury in the

midst of wild surroundings, where their only neighbors are peasants and small farmers. Here they and their company stand (as a rule) aloof from every one else, a smear of civilization, and as often as not spoiling with their hideous incongruities a beautiful prospect. Any one who has been to Tintagel will appreciate what I say. At the door of this grand hostelry, then, I arrived like Father Christmas, or a snow man—except for the top hat, for I had the pipe, whose crater being long extinct was likewise filled with snow. I entered, and stood dribbling on the mat, rather dazzled with this sudden transition from the post office at Dolanog, and the nine-mile boy to the first-class hotel. A boots came and inspected me, and I wondered how much he thought I was worth for a tip. It was wrong in me to think thus, for the next moment he did me the most humane service of lending me a coat, instead of my own sopping vestment. So I called for two poached eggs and tea, and asked how far it was to Bala.

"Fifteen miles, sir," said some one in the office.

"Can I walk there easily?"

"What!"

"Can I walk there?"

"Gracious me, no! You have to cross the Berwen mountains," said one.

"And there will be big drifts by now," said another.

"Besides, there is no moon," said a third.

"And there is nothing but a very rough track, and a precipice sheer off that," said the first again.

"You have no faith!" said I.

"Look here!" said one of them, coming forward, presenting me with a little guide-book open at a page. "It describes the road as it is in *summer*. You read it, and then think about whether you'll go."

"I will read it to-night in Bala," said I, placing it securely in my rucksack.

So I betook myself to my poached eggs, and gazed from the windows out into the twilight on the dismal snow-storm falling into the black waters of Vyrnwy Lake. This great piece of water, which is five miles from end to end, is the artificial product of a flooded valley. It is the Tivoli of Liverpool, and both waterworks and hotel belong to the corporation of that city.

Day dies much harder when it is snowing. I suppose it is because there is so much white about. Anyhow it was by no means dark when at half-past five of the clock, having tipped the boots with cringing obsequiousness more than I had paid the post-mistress of Dolanog in the fulness of my heart, I sallied forth from civility.

As all scene-gazing was out of the question, and as the road was absolutely flat for five miles while it followed the lake—for my ascent to the mountains did not branch off till the head of the lake—I set to work to recite Scott's "*Lay of the Last Minstrel*" to myself. Except for an old gentleman who crept silently past me on a tricycle of very ancient date, I saw no one on the great and dull high-road that leads round Vyrnwy Lake. For a few moments the snow ceased, and by that weird gray light that seemed born not of the sky but of the earth, I caught a vision of great hills like flying buttresses descending into the lake, with snow and desolation and smoking cloud upon their shoulders, and I was amazed at my stupidity in wanting to cross such things at such a time of night. But the snow soon came down again abundantly, and blocked out my future. About some thirty stanzas into the Third Canto of the "*Lay of the Last Minstrel*" I arrived at my point of departure from

the main road. First of all, I plunged into an avenue of dripping trees, dark as pitch, while a swollen river that I could not see roared past me on the right. It sounded uncomfortably close, but I kept up against the bank to my left till after a bit I dropped the river away to the right and got to more open country. "Ah," thought I, as I ground my way up the hills and felt the snow go deeper and deeper, "now I am in a wilderness!" I had scarcely thought thus when I became aware of what seemed two red eyes glowering out of the darkness above me. On arriving at these orbs I discovered them to be embers that glowed through a heap of old kindling whose energy was becoming extinct. They were under a pent-house cover by a square stone building. I called out three times to see if any one were within, and at last on hearing a voice (though knowing not whence it came) this occult conversation ensued.

"How far is it to Bala?"

"Tobacco!"

"How far is it to Bala?"

"Oh, good bacco."

"What is good tobacco?"

"Yes, indeed, bacco very good."

"Do you want some tobacco?" (This in Welsh.)

"Yes, indeed, Tad Mawr, I want bacco."

"I have only one pipeful," said I, thinking of my own needs.

"That will be enough," replied the voice, thinking of his.

Feeling round the stone building in the direction of the voice, I found it issuing out of a burly head that was projected from a kind of long open window. The next instant the light of a lantern shone out, and I saw into a kind of barn half full of hay or bracken. The lamp had been lit by a woman. Both she and her husband were fully dressed, and were apparently spending the night here for the



looking after of mountain beasts in the snow. Anyhow, their night equipment was a simple one. When the pipeful of tobacco had been transhipped,

"How far off is the precipice?" said I.

"Oh, just a little farther on you shall fall over it when you keep to the left."

"And if I keep well into the right I shall be safe?"

"Yes, indeed—mind you don't tumble off!" and he put the light out, and I heard him bound into his depth of security and comfort.

Now, strange as it may seem, snow is a most companionable thing. The whole of this stretch from Llanwddyn to Bala, though I believe it lies over one of the wildest regions of Wales, and though it was dark and moonless and snowing, and though I knew myself to be set in the middle of many unknown dangers, I felt not the least atom lonely, and both lonely and awed I have often felt on a broad highroad at night, where I could suspect no dangers.

At last I came to what appeared to be the highest point of this long pull up. Here I stood still and looked round and wondered where on earth I was. The snow had now entirely ceased to fall, and above me I could see the stars shine brightly out of the deep black heaven. Far down below me on the left sounded the voice of a cataract, and a great undulating vastness of white without shape or shadow marked all I could see of the Berwen Hills. It seemed to me that there was a wonderful solemnity here, and though this proceeded from the evidence of my eyes rather than my ears, it was as though some one was playing a great organ. And the symphony was not one of deep rolling notes and chords that shattered the air with their reverberations, but a small,

sweet air, insistent and perpetual in the recurrence of a simple theme, with now and then high fluting notes and now and then low mournful ones. But the feeling was that it was a very great organ and capable of a tremendous volume of sound, but that now it was asleep and its performer drowsing over the keyboard, so that it breathed but the voice of a dreaming.

And now the way descended all the time, and I put my stick through the bracings of my rucksack, and pulling it tight against my back ran for four good miles. The track led me right down into a gorge, and from thence into the side of a very dark valley with trees on either side of the road. At about half-past ten I crossed the end of Bala Lake, just as the tawny moon rolled up out of the valley of the Dee.

When I got to Bala town, after inquiry, I made my way to the Aunt of the Maid of the Inn at Berriew, where I had supped with the aquatic children. After supper I made my way to the kitchen, having propitiated the eldest son with the gift of a cigarette card, and told Mrs. Jones that her niece had recommended me to go there. "I have no niece there," she said.

"But," said I, "you must have, or I should not have been here now."

"Well, I haven't!" said she with great emphasis. "And that is not the writing of any niece of mine, so far as I can remember."

"Then show me photographs of all your nieces that I may identify," said I, for people in this station of life always have plenty of photographs of all their relatives. When I had found the right picture, and luckily at the same time remembered the name of the girl, I submitted both my facts to the Unbelieving Aunt. Then she said that it was quite impossible that this niece should be at Berriew, as she had heard from her in Shrewsbury a year ago.

What can one do with a mind like this? It is this oyster view of life which sees the world, the flesh, and the devil, and God and His angels too, through a crack, and shuts that crack up when anybody approaches, that is unfortunately so characteristic of many of the Welsh, from which cause springs that vindictive bitterness of feeling that the Chapel has for the Church in Wales.

"Where are you off to now?" said the little maid who stood on the step to see me away at seven o'clock in the morning.

"To Llanfairfechan," I replied.

"Where is that?"

"Near Bangor."

"Oh, you won't get there in a week," she cried.

"You have no faith," said I. "I shall be there to-night."

Llanfairfechan is about fifty miles from Bala. But I thought that by going straight across country I could get there in something less than forty. As a matter of fact, by the way I took it turned out to be thirty-seven.

It had been snowing a good deal during the night, and the road out of the town was sloppy and dismal and discouraging. All the more so as the sky was gray and threatening, and there was no view. A mile or two farther on, where there was little traffic, and the night's white work lay a soft two inches over the hard lumpy incrustations of the day before, I saw two pairs of small footprints going from me. A little later, right in their path, I came across a large signature which thus announced itself, "David Jones." In another half-mile I saw a boy and a little girl trudging on in front of me with a satchel full of schoolbooks between them. As I came abreast of this couple I shouted out, "Good morning, Davie!"

The children stopped and looked at each other a moment, being obviously

overcome with my clairvoyant powers, and then, without a word, the boy dashed through the snow-laden hedge into a field, pulling his sister after him. I made no doubt that they had mistaken me for the Devil. Therefore, a little way farther on I wrote in the snow with the point of my stick "Diawl," which is the Welsh equivalent for our common enemy. A little farther than this I left the road and took a rough track which crosses a range of hills that lie between the Bala district and Pentre Foelas. Thus I should save nearly five miles, for the road goes round by Cerig-y-Druiddion. The snow was very soft here, and the place being very uneven was full of little drifts. High up it was knee-deep very often for a long way, so that I was beginning to get rather tired of walking in the snow. But now the sky was brightening up and I saw a little patch of blue. There is an old saying which decrees that if you can see enough blue sky to make a pair of breeches out of, it is going to be fine. So I watched this patch with great anxiety, being convinced in my heart, however, that with care I could make small-clothes for a little lad out of it. Nor were I and my proverb wrong, for soon came not only blue sky enough to have clothed a mountain but the sun himself, and all the beautiful snow-bound hills lit up and sparkled. It is marvellous what a difference the sun makes on one's spirits when he comes out.

In a curious hollow in these hills I found a frozen stream surrounded by a little dwarf wood. And every branch and twig of this was decked and hung with either icicles or snow, and stooping my head low I looked through such a vista of fairy splendor to the blue sky beyond as made my blood tingle with the joy of beholding such a lovely thing.

Somewhat farther on, round the

elbow of a hill, I came in sight of some cottages in a distant hollow, and at the same time into sound of the call of a plover. The bird seemed to be in high feather, for the call was one that betrays festivity in the heart of the peewit who owns it. As I am sometimes fond of calling birds, I placed my rucksack in the snow under the hedge and started to imitate him. We had soon established an understanding with each other, and though the bird seemed to be approaching, he was doing so with cautious slowness, for I ventured to peep once or twice but I could not see him. So I let him blow his pipe alone for a little, making believe that I was grown sulky with his saucy caution, till at last on his coming closer I let out a most plaintive "pee weet!" At that moment I saw sneaking round the corner, with every observance of cunning and stealth, not a lapwing but a small boy. I don't know which was the more surprised at beholding the other. At the moment I could not think what was the Welsh for peewit, so for a while we two human birds stood and stared at each other; then I bethought me—"Lle mae'r cornchwylan?" (Where is the peewit?) I asked. From his pocket he slowly drew a very ordinary whistle that lacked a pea. It was far the best imitation of a plover I have ever heard, and I told him so, but he on his part was so disappointed that, instead of congratulating me on my performance, he went away on the verge of tears. I therefore made no doubt that in his other pocket was secreted a catapult.

The next hill commanded a most glorious prospect, and here at last I saw old Snowdon and all his venerable horned brethren, with the sun upon their ermine snows and the shadow blue and hazy upon their sweeping flanks and craters. It was a sight to make one breathe deep and praise God

for all creation. What a thing it is to climb a hill and put a great valley below you, making you as it were a Lord of Creation, and it your footstool! Hereabouts were several mountain ponies standing fetlock deep with their heads bowed and hoary snow frozen to their shaggy manes. From this place I struck straight for Pentre Foelas, which I could see in the distance. Coming on to the plain I passed two farms that bore unmistakable signs of antiquity and nobility. The one I was closest to had a fine old walled garden and a gatehouse in the perpendicular style, but whose sometime haughty portal was now blocked by an impudent wheelbarrow which had even the absurd impertinence to be lying on its back.

I soon came into the highway again and entered Pentre Foelas at a cross-roads. Here were standing two police constables and a small crowd of people. When I made my appearance these folk seemed much diverted, and while I stood and turned to gaze upon the hills I had just crossed, the two limbs of the law came sidling up and prowled suspiciously round me. After this performance I entered the inn and called for bread and cheese and cider. The landlady seemed rather to take offence at my lightsome tone of voice. She looked at me impressively and then out into the road at the policemen.

"Murder!" she said.

"Perhaps I am the murderer," said I, assuming a tone as morbid as herself.

"Duw Anwyl, I hope not," she cried, dramatically contriving to drop a fork. "But I saw them look all round you, so you can't be."

Having pointed out to me this convincing proof of my innocence, she straightway served me. I had determined to walk from here to Llanbedr, and then cross the moun-

tain that lies between there and the sea. I could trace on my map a sort of road or track that went from Llanbedr to the top of the ridge and then entered at right angles the remains of a Roman road that led from north to south along the chine of this hog-backed hill. It seemed to be marked here more as a matter of antiquity than as serving any practical purpose. But I have always great faith in Roman roads when they are out of the way and have not been tampered with by enlightened people. At any rate part of it was walled and seemed to end in a gateway. From this point there was four or five miles of trackless country down the other side of the mountain into Llanfair-fechan. There was a more or less winding footpath marked in the neighborhood, but I knew that it would be lying too far beneath the snow for any purpose of mine. So when I had finished my lunch I laid off three courses on the map and trusted to luck and the virtues of my compass to get me to my destination. Then after having purchased and despatched a pictorial post-card I left Pentre Foelas and the people who were looking out for the murderer behind me.

Getting up on to the high ground again I had a most wonderful view of the Welsh mountains from Cader Idris to the old bluff I was going to cross that night. The air was very still and frosty, and over the valley of the Conway hung a thin blue haze of smoke which seemed to make the old kings of Wales beyond look all the more grand and silent. When one looks at a dangerous thing on a calm day, such as mountains in the snow, or a sea full of treacherous currents, or the crest of a volcano when only steam is issuing forth into the placidity of morning, there seems to come from them a fascination like a spell of witchery that draws with all-com-

elling vehemence. Thus, when I looked at my old lump of rock, did I yearn for the time that night when I should cross it.

It was a quarter-past five and growing dark when I got to Llanrwst. Here I partook of what the restaurants fondly call "A plain tea." I also sent a telegram to my Fairy Godmother predicting my arrival at ten o'clock. Then I set off again into the night, with twelve miles before me and twenty-five left behind. To my unbounded joy the sky was still clear, for it was freezing hard, and the stars were bright in the sky. But this great dead-level luxurious road that I had to traverse for the next six miles, though it was free from snow and equipped with every convenience for the traveller, wearied me to death, for my heart was in the highlands. When I had passed the great aluminum works at Trefriw I fell in with two Scottish mechanics, and we discussed the merits and demerits of the Clyde navigation companies, for this and the shortcomings of their employers were the only things that seemed to interest them. They were worthy fellows, though marvellously circumscribed in their views. Anyhow we all arrived at an inn at Llanbedr, where I had a glass of sherry and stood my Scottish friends something equally stupid. Here I entered the parlor to make a last survey of my way over the hill. I had not been there more than five minutes before three men entered. One of them was much more conspicuous in his bearing and general appearance than the others. To him, therefore, I addressed my remarks.

"Do you know Cae Coch and the Roman road going south which is walled for half a mile and then ends in a gateway?"

"The Gap of Two Stones, I should know it," said he, and he gave a knowing wink at his companions.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because, young man, I own all the land just about there."

"That is very useful," said I, "because with your permission I shall cross your property to-night on my way to Llanfairfechan."

At this the other two set up a loud laugh, but he looked very serious.

"By gummy!" said one of them. "There's a rum 'un for you!" and the other said, "I'll lay any man two drinks he doesn't leave this house when Mr. — tells him something about it." But Mr. — said, "Though it's my own land, and I know every inch of it, I wouldn't cross there on a summer evening, let alone now."

"Sir," said I, "either you have no marching compass or you have no faith. Look here," and I took my compass out of its little leathern house and placed it on the table, shading it with my hand so that the radium points emitted a faint violet haze. This seemed to impress the company, for one of them shouted into the other's ears, "By gummy, there's a rum 'un for you!" and the other looked as if he were prepared to lay drinks in any direction. But the third looked still more serious. "There's a big marsh up there," said he. "If you get into that you won't get out again." "By gummy! he won't," said his friend.

"Come! young man," said Mr. —, for he alone seemed to take my proposition seriously. "There's snow to your middle up there, and there will be no moon; have a drink with us, sleep here, and go round by the lower road in the morning. It is nearly eight o'clock."

"So it is," said I. "Gentlemen, I must thank you and bid you good-night."

But nobody returned my salutation. Mr. — shook his head solemnly, while one of his friends exclaimed,

"By gummy! there's a rum 'un for you!"

And so at last I felt the push of the hill at my feet and the pull of it at my shoulders, and up I went in high spirits. The houses of the little town kept me company for some way, but at last I was out in the open once more breathing the fresh free air, and feeling at my heart all the nobility of independence. After the lights of the valley had all vanished away below me, and I began to think that I must be within two miles of the top of the hill and the Roman road, I came to a very puzzling fork in the lane. As my little electric lamp, which had fallen ill and would not light, had recovered its health under the surgical treatment of my own hand, I shone it on to the map, but I had rather lost my position, and I mistook this turn for another, and so took the left branch of the fork. By the weird glimmering of the snow I could tell that the country was very wild. Right in front of me in the starlight loomed the great dome of Drum, and I began to be afraid that I had taken the wrong turn. But I pushed on a little farther and caught sight of a lantern glow which seemed to proceed from some farm buildings, for it moved backwards and forwards in a circumscribed area. This track that I followed led me to it, and rather abruptly, for I walked into a gate without seeing it. Climbing this and entering the yard, I saw a man with a hurricane lantern going into a stable. So I went up to him. When he turned about and saw me, I believe he thought that I was a spirit. I had been taken for the devil in the morning of this day, and for a murderer at noon, so I was not surprised now when he smote his brow with the back of his hand and cried out, "Duw Anwyl Mawr!"

"Where have you come from?" said he in Welsh.



"Bala," said I.

"With the train?"

"No, with my feet."

"Tad Mawr!"

"And I am going to Llanfairfechan."

"Llanfairfechan?"

"Yes."

"To-night?"

"Yes."

"Llanfairfechan?"

"Yes; what is the matter with you?"

"Well, what is the matter with *you*, I'm thinking."

"I am perfectly sound, thank you."

"Llanfairfechan?"

I assured him once more that this was my destination. He was a tall, strong man, with a deep black beard and keen, kindly eyes. He now stepped between me and the door, as though to intercept my egress. "By the dear God, you shall not go there to-night."

"I am sorry, my friend, but I must."

"No, you shall not; you shall have the best room and the best bed in the house; but you shall not cross the mountain to-night, for you would be surely lost, and guilt would be on my soul."

Just as I was preparing an answer the door of the house opened, and let out a long flood of light upon the snow beyond the yard. And a little girl came out, and stood and looked across the darkness to our lantern in the stable. She was only a tot, but I could see her pretty little face and the light in her golden hair, and her eyes big with wonder at the noise of a stranger.

"Father!" she called out in soft, pretty Welsh.

"Yes, little one," he answered. "Wait a moment for me, sir," and the good man was gone to the side of his daughter. But I dared not wait now. I slipped quietly by the outbuildings and climbed the gate, and was away again in a minute. However, I shall always remember this man as one of

the best and most hospitable I have ever met.

I now ran back to the fork in the lane, and took the other direction. In about two miles I attained the end of this lane, and got into the walled portion of the Roman road. The warm red glow from a window in Cae Coch farm was on my right, and I knew that this was the last light I should see till I picked up the lights of Llanfairfechan. So when I turned my back upon Cae Coch I felt like one who has burned his ships. The snow was very deep here, and drifted up nearly to the top of the left-hand wall, so that even keeping up to the right-hand wall it was over my knees at nearly every step. But the air was so fine and the night and stars so inspiring as I plunged on and on that I did not grow weary. I had come to notice that every time I flashed my little electric lamp to look at the map, a weird, husky noise invariable took place in my neighborhood like the sound a broom makes when it sweeps aside dead leaves. It was a curious thing to stand quite still for a moment till the great silence of the stars and the night and the snow almost crushed you, then to turn on the little electric light and hear at once this mysterious noise like a spirit evoked. I am very superstitious, and so, as I always carefully cross out a magpie with my left foot, I took care always to take off my hat to this noise when I heard it, though I knew it was only caused by the mountain sheep hurrying off, terrified at the light.

At last I came to what the men below in the tavern had called the Gap of Two Stones. The walls, which were enormous both in height and masonry, did not seem to me to serve any particular purpose. However, they now ceased, like the finger-tips of the outstretched arms of civilization; and here seemed an end of all things—a

real abomination of desolation. I think I have observed before that snow is a most companionable thing, otherwise I am sure I must have felt lonely in this place, where all sign of a track was lost in unknown depths of snow.

I got out my compass, and waited till the little radium points coincided, then I shaped my course on a star, and commenced the last stage of my journey. I had hardly gone two steps, however, before I tumbled head over heels into a drift, in whose bosom reposed a gorse bush. When I had emerged from this I held more cautiously to my way.

At last I came to a wall, and not only to a wall, but a stile in that wall, which meant that I was well on my course, and must have struck the footpath. Looking about me, I could see several rounded heights and eminences, which all looked very close. But nothing in distance is more deceptive than the crests of hills at night. The only test I know is to watch as you proceed how the stars move in relation to the hill. If there is very little apparent change of position, the hill is a long way off, if otherwise *vice versa*.

Descending on the other side of the stile I held on my old course, but I had not gone far before I felt the ground quake and shudder ominously beneath me, and a dull noise of cracking ice came to me. Then I bethought me suddenly about the words of the man at the inn when he warned me of a bog that was dangerous. I recognized at once that it must really be the source of the little river that flows through Llanfairfechan, and therefore it had only half-frozen. So I walked due north for some distance, and then altered my old course two points and went on again. After a time I came

to another wall, but no stile this time. As I climbed over it I suddenly sighted what I took to be a bright star, but as I looked, to my astonishment, it went out. In a few seconds it reappeared, and in another few it went out again. I could not think that any star possessed such sober and regular habits of scintillation. So I flashed my little light on to my map, and lo! I had been looking straight at the eye of a lighthouse on the north coast of Anglesey, and I knew that I was dead on my course. A sailor would scoff at a landsman who navigated himself by compass and then did not know a lighthouse when he saw one. Now, when I looked over the lower darkness, that I knew must be the sea, I could make out many a tiny point of light creeping on, outward or homeward bound.

At the bottom of this wall a little river was running. It did not appear to be either very broad or very deep, and so I prepared to cross it by the big stones that were sticking above it. But when I had placed my foot on the biggest I discovered too late that it was covered with a film of ice, and that my boots had nails in them, so losing my balance I flopped into a pool. After this I came to a very steep descent, and right below me, like a soft radiance, I saw the glow, though not the lights of Llanfairfechan. "I ought to be striking that lane where my course is laid to," said I. I had hardly uttered this sentiment, when my legs flew from beneath me and I found myself bumping down a steep slide. When I recovered my normal posture I found that I was in a cart-track, and in another five minutes I was in the lane. After that I lost no more time but ran with all my speed, and reached my destination at half-past eleven.

## OUR ALTY.

BY M. E. FRANCIS (MRS. FRANCIS BLUNDELL).

## CHAPTER VII.

"John!" said Mrs. Fazackerly.

She completed the sentence by the characteristic jerk of the head which in Lancashire conveys such a world of meaning—affirmative, interrogative, emphatically negative, or, as in this case, still more emphatically disapproving.

Following the direction indicated by this gesture, and endorsed by his mother's fixed and astonished gaze, John looked out of the window, and beheld what first seemed to be an unoccupied ladder supported by the outer lintel. On closer inspection two shapely, feminine feet, the toes pointing towards the room, a pair of well-turned ankles, and the hem of a blue pinafore revealed themselves on the upper rung; the rest of the person to whom they belonged being hidden from view. The blue pinafore told a tale.

"It's Alty," observed John, in an explanatory tone.

"Well, o' course 'tis Alty. Theer's no other faymale in these parts as 'ud be so crazy as to climb up a ladder same as that—all by hersel', too, an' sech a windy day. 'Tis mich if ladder an' all isn't blown down."

"What's she doin'?" queried he.

"Hark," rejoined Mrs. Fazackerly, who, though gifted with a habitual flow of words, could on occasion be as chary of them as himself.

John hearkened obediently; the sound of hammering was distinctly audible, also the swishing of branches.

"She's agate o' trimmin' up yon rose tree," he remarked. "I noticed 'twas all breakin' away fro' wall."

"Well, an' that's a pretty job for a young lass—eh dear!"

The exclamation was caused by the disappearance of first one of Alty's feet and then the other; but the hammering continued.

"She's standin' on gutter," explained John, with a delighted chuckle. "It sticks out just theer where it runs round house."

"Well, yo' step outside an' put a stop to it," ordered his mother. "'Tis as bad as murder to let her carry on wi' sech fool tricks."

John stepped out and found that, as he had expected, Alty was kneeling on the rain-pipe, clinging with one hand to the projecting roof, while with the other she plied her hammer. She looked down at him flushed and triumphant.

"I'm welly done now," she announced. "I couldn't reach top bit fro' ladder, an' it 'ud be a pity to cut it."

"You'll break your neck if you don't look out," rejoined he.

"No fear," she laughed, "this is a deal safer nor ladder."

He wisely refrained from further comment until she had finished her self-appointed task; then, holding the ladder in place, assisted her to descend.

"That was no job for a wench," he said, speaking rather seriously, when she had reached the ground.

"Well," returned she, with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes, "there's some jobs as seem to be nobry's jobs. That there rose tree have been fallin' away fro' wall ever since I come here; this wind 'ud ha' broke it all to pieces if I hadn't took it in hand."

"My mother's a bit vexed," observed John dispassionately.

Alty sighed.

"Well, yo' know, Mester Fazackerly, I do think there's no pleasin' old ladies—some of 'em. Grandma's never satisfied, no matter what I do, an' if I was to do nowt but what pleased Mrs. Fazackerly, I'd never do no work as 'ud be worth countin'."

"Now, see here," said John, "couldn't ye make up your mind to sit quiet indoors this forenoon? My mother's noan so very well. If you was to keep her quiet an' content I'd reckon it a good mornin's work, an' there's not mich you could do at the gardenin' this awful windy day."

The girl's face clouded over, but she went with John to the porch without protest.

He marched in front according to the recognized masterful habit of the north-country householder; but turned with his hand on the doorhandle.

"Please my mother, Alty, an' you'll please me."

When he came in at dinner-time his conscience slightly smote him on observing the girl seated opposite Mrs. Fazackerly and diligently repairing a sheet. This had been cut in two and was being sewn together in the middle, thus procuring a neat appearance, and ensuring length of wear, and at the same time much discomfort for future sleepers.

The window was shut; Mrs. Fazackerly was not going to have the teeth blown out of her head, she said, and even this big room was intolerably warm, for the day was sultry as well as blustery. Alty's face was flushed, and her eyes downcast; her lips pursed themselves as she sewed. But Mrs. Fazackerly was triumphant.

"Theer now," she exclaimed, as her son entered, "Alty looks more seemly sittin' quiet w' her sewin' like any other dacent wench, nor climbin' ladders an' sech like! I've been tellin' her so all mornin'."

Alty raised her eyes with a reproachful glance at John; it was evident, indeed, that Mrs. Fazackerly had told her a good deal in the course of the fore-noon.

"That's reet," he rejoined, "Alty's done very well. I'm sorry I can't spare her no more this arternoon, though,

but I've a job for her in the garden arter dinner."

"In the garden," repeated his mother testily; "whatever mak' o' job can yo' find for her i' th' garden on sech a day as this?"

"In the garden and orchard," insisted John. "Apples is comin' down by the score—they mun all be picked up an' carried into granary else they'll be spoilt. I couldn't trust the lads," he added; "'tis Alty's job."

She sprang to her feet, throwing down her sheet, her whole face brightening.

"I'll not be long over dinner," she cried, "an' I'll hurry back. Wheer mun I find some baskets?"

"Fold up your work first," said John; this time it was he who jerked his head in admonitory fashion.

Alty stooped, reddening and much crestfallen; though she might have guessed that the son had but intercepted the lecture which the mother was preparing, and which would doubtless have been already administered had not the good lady been seized with one of her periodical attacks of coughing. Mrs. Fazackerly was still a prey to this spasm when the folding of the sheet was completed, and John jerked his head again as a hint to Alty to depart before ultimate recovery.

The wind continued high all that afternoon, a fact which did not in any way impair Alty's zest in her work; she felt, indeed, something of the wild joy which seizes a young colt in similar weather as she ran from tree to tree, ducking, with a peal of laughter, to avoid the occasional hail of ripe fruit; hearkening with leaping pulses to the singing of the wind among the boughs, the distant roar of the sea, the general creaking and groaning and flapping of woodwork, loose slates and tiles, wet linen, for Jenny and Maggie had dallied longer than usual over the

weekly wash, and sundry household gear was still hanging from the clothes-lines in the rear of the orchard.

Alty's cheeks were as red as her own apples, and her hair, escaped from its fastenings, was hanging in disorder round her face when John Fazackerly came out to the scene of her labors.

"There, that'll do for to-day, lass," he remarked, his lips parting in a kindly smile under his blond moustache; "it's gone tea-time. I wer' goin' to tell yo' to step in and join us, but it's mich if my mother 'ud ever get over the sight of you as you are now. Eh, my word, Alty! You've made yourself a wild thing."

Alty's cheeks grew, if possible, redder, but her eyes did not cease to dance.

"Eh, it's easy talkin', Mr. Fazackerly, but nobry could keep hersel' spick an' span in this wind."

A mischievous blast at this moment caught her blue pinafore, converted it into a balloon, and, after sporting with it for a moment, tossed it over her head.

When Alty had captured and restored it to its place, she found her master in possession of the clothes-basket which she had filled with wind-falls.

"Well, cut away home, as how 'tis," he remarked, with a good-natured nod; "it's getting on for six o'clock. I'll take this indoors."

She went out of the open orchard gate, clutching her pinafore with one hand and her hair with the other, her hat swinging by its elastic from one elbow; with fluttering skirts and lowered head she ran down the lane and up the flagged path which led to her own door.

But that door was locked, and on going round the house and peering through the kitchen window, the girl saw that her grandmother had fallen

fast asleep in her chair by the hearth.

The locking of the door was a precaution often adopted by Mrs. Orrell when feeling more than usually out of sorts, and though she doubtless would have admitted her grand-daughter, had she been awake, the expression of her slumbering countenance was not such as to encourage the desire to disturb her.

"This'll mak' the third time I'm late for tea," said Alty to herself. "I'll get a proper bargerin' as how 'tis, but there's no need to wake her up for't afore she's ready—if I'm to keep my word to yon chap i' th' wood, I'd best get it o'er first."

In the shelter of the whitewashed wall she performed a hasty toilet; re-plaiting and tying-up her hair—which remained, nevertheless, a good deal roughened and very curly—straightening and smoothing her pinafore and putting on her hat, wearing the elastic for greater security under her chin. Then she washed her hands at the pump, and took her way by the field path to the trysting-place.

Dennis was already awaiting her within the wood at a little distance from the gate. He was in khaki to-day, and his face was rather pale and somewhat severe in expression. He had employed the ten minutes or so during which he had awaited the girl in preparing a harangue intended not only to open her eyes to his own peculiar plight, but to touch her recently awakened womanly heart. He had not doubted but that Alty must have spent the twenty-four hours, which had elapsed since their previous meeting, in curious and interested speculations with regard to himself; he expected her, in fact, to be as eager to hear as he was to speak. And now, not only was she late, but the day and night which had passed since the episode recently described, an episode fraught even for him with weighty meaning.



appeared to have done away with the effect of his labors.

This was not Alty, the maiden, just emerging into womanhood; this was Alty, the tomboy—worse than a tomboy. As she vaulted the gate and came towards him, making abortive catches, now at her crushed pinafore, now at the hat brim which the wind took a malicious pleasure in lifting from her tousled head, she looked like an overgrown child of twelve.

Dennis's eyes roaming discontentedly over her person, took in every detail of the shabby working dress, and noted, with special dissatisfaction, the fact of the elastic of her hat being worn under the chin. The blue eyes were eager, a little impatient, but with no pleasurable impatience; the desire to "get it o'er" was plainly perceptible in their gaze.

"Well?" she inquired, halting beside him. "I've come, but I can't stop long—I haven't had no tea."

"Yes, you've come, and very late too," he returned in a vexed tone. "What kept you so long? It certainly wasn't dressing up in my honor."

"Nay," said Alty. "Grandma locked the door and I couldn't get in to change—but I don't know as I should ha' changed as how 'tis. I've nobbut come for a minute because yo' axed me; besides, I don't howd wi' gettin' my good clothes all blown about an' maybe tore again' the hedges. Yo' didn't change, neither," she added.

Dennis drew himself up with dignity; as a matter of fact, he had retained his uniform partly because of his fear of being late for the rendezvous, and partly because he deemed it becoming. His mental vision had conjured up a picture of the picturesque appearance of his own form in soldier guise, and he had hoped that his aspect would have impressed the yielding girlish figure, which imagination had drawn for him as pacing by

his side, listening with rapt intentness to his utterances. Things were not turning out as he had anticipated; the actual picture was hopelessly out of drawing, even its framework of woods, which should have been all gentle gloom and silent mystery, was now the reverse of his dream. He could hardly make himself heard with this roaring wind and these creaking boughs.

"Come a little further into the wood," he said, ignoring the girl's somewhat pert comment on his own appearance; "we shall be deafened if we stand here. I don't want to shriek at you."

He led the way with long, impatient strides, Alty following, away from the neighborhood of the arbores, down the long avenue of beeches, then pursuing the path which turned off at right angles, to the very heart of the green. Here there was comparative peace, the taller trees on the outskirts of the wood sheltering this group of young oaks and Scotch firs with its thick undergrowth of rhododendron.

"Now," said Dennis, turning and facing her, "you must give me your attention, Alty; you must listen to me seriously, for I am going to talk of serious matters. I am going to take you into my confidence, and I am not a man who confides easily."

Here he paused; she was gazing at him with round astonished eyes; he noted with satisfaction that he had succeeded in capturing her attention.

"You may wonder," he resumed, "why I should open my heart to you, considering the—eh—dissimilarity of our positions and the comparative shortness of our acquaintanceship."

As the syllables came rolling out in his pleasant, musical voice, Alty became more and more impressed, indeed, slightly awestruck; she understood about one word in three, but managed to catch the drift of his preamble. She was puzzled, mollified,

and beginning to be a little excited.

"I have two reasons," went on the young man; "the first is, my innate sense of justice. After what has passed between us, I feel you have a right to know my actual position towards womankind, and one woman in particular. My second reason is the wish to submit my very peculiar case to the judgment of a person so straightforward and unworldly as yourself. Living as I do in a world of conventions, it would be comforting, refreshing to me, to seek the opinion of one who possesses a fresh, unspoiled mind, and an innocent, simple heart."

He drew a long breath, his dark eyes fixing themselves penetratingly upon her attentive face. Its expression pleased him nearly as well as the sound of his own voice, and the flowing sentences, which really sounded even better when actually spoken, than when merely shaped in his mind. He was beginning to enjoy himself amazingly.

"I don't believe," he continued, speaking more slowly and suffering his voice to assume a mournful cadence, "I don't believe any man in this world ever found himself in so strange a position as I do on this very day. Bound of my own free will, yet with a heart passionately craving for liberty, bartering that precious liberty for dross—miserable dross—which from my soul I despise—binding myself hand and foot, though I am only twenty-four, and if ever there was a man who craved to stretch his wings before tying himself down, it is I——"

Here he stopped, breathless.

Alty was gazing at him with strained attention, her lips a little parted, her eyes solemn.

Dennis sighed, dashed his hands across his brow, shook his head, and then spoke again, this time in his ordinary tone.

"I fear I have been talking wildly,"

he said. "I doubt if I have made myself understood."

"Well," Alty was beginning dubiously, when she suddenly stopped short and lowered her voice: "Keeper's comin'!" she whispered.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Even amid the far away raging of the wind Dennis could detect the sound of heavy steps, and crackling branches. He stared blankly at Alty, who stared back at him aghast.

"Eh, my word!" she gasped, "where mun we hide? If he ketches us he'll run us out o' this pretty quick, and maybe summons us."

"That big clump of rhododendrons would hide you, I think," returned he. "Creep right under, and I'll pull the boughs over you, I'll stand behind this big beech. I can manage to keep it between me and him. Get under, quick!"

He was no longer mysterious and martyized, but eager and mischievous—a very schoolboy.

He lifted up the trailing branches of the rhododendrons and Alty crept underneath, rolling up her pinafore lest its color should betray her; she wished there had been time to take it off altogether, the dress beneath being brownish-gray, a hue more discreet under the circumstances.

Dennis, having screened her as well as he could with the glossy leaves, darted to the beech tree, flattening himself against the trunk and appreciating the wisdom which had decreed khaki to be suitable apparel in cases where it was not desirable to attract attention.

The heavy regular footsteps approached, and now a tall burly figure came in sight, swung along between the hiding-places of the two culprits, and suddenly wheeled. Dennis, peering cautiously out from his ambush, saw him retrace his steps, and then stoop.

"Ow!" exclaimed Alty, with even greater energy than had characterized her utterance when impersonating an enchanted princess on the previous day.

"Come out o' that!" exclaimed the keeper. "Come out o' that, you hussy, whoever yo' met be."

"Leave go of my ankle, then," returned Alty.

On this request being complied with, she crept forth on hands and knees, and finally stood up, looking very much ashamed of herself.

"Well, if it isn't Alty Orrell!" ejaculated the man, amazed. "Eh, to think on't, an' me at your grandfeyther's funeral not above ten days ago!"

"Eh, Mester Prescott, I wasn't doin' any harm," returned Alty, with a sob. "I was nobbut walkin' in the wood. I nobbut crep' under bush when I heard yo' comin'."

"Aye, I reckon yo' crep' under bush to hide fro' me," he rejoined, "but what was yo' doin' in wood at all? D'ye think as folks locks their gates an' spends their brass on barbed wire an' all, an' goes to the expense o' havin' boards painted wi' warnin's about trespassers for young lasses to take no notice on't?"

"I wasn't doin' no harm," repeated Alty, with pale lips. She paused, wondering how to excuse herself without implicating her companion, and feeling at the same time a little astonished that the latter did not step forward to her assistance.

"What did yo' coom here for, I'm axin' yo'?" persisted the keeper. "Reet here, in the very middle of the covert, too—enough to freeten away all the game as is in the place. Coom, give me a straight answer now."

Alty waited a moment, but there was no movement in the neighborhood of the beech tree; then she said desperately:

"Eh, well, I didn't mean to freeten

no game, Mester Prescott. I coom fur in, because 'twas so windy."

"Well, you'll walk out now, if yo' please, wind or no wind," returned the keeper sternly. "I've a good mind to summons yo'."

"Nay, you'll not do that, Mester Prescott," urged Alty. "I did wrong to coom, but I'll not coom again if you'll let me off this time. I wouldn't like Grandma to be upset."

"Well," said Mr. Prescott, in a mollified tone, "if yo'll promise me that, I'll overlook it for once, but it must never happen again."

Alty preceded him to the gate, which she cleared, according to her habit, the grim features of the guardian of the woods relaxing as he watched her; then she began walking hastily away towards the village.

She was negotiating a stile which divided a fine expanse of pasture from a neighboring turnip-field when the sound of running feet made her turn, and she beheld Dennis hurrying towards her.

Quickly whisking round she would have eluded his pursuit, had not her pinafore caught on the splintered rail, and imprisoned her till he came up.

"I don't want to ha' no more to do wi' yo'," she exclaimed, before Dennis, flushed and panting, could speak. "Yo' let me bear all the blame. I think 'twas cowardly o' yo' not to say a word to keeper when he wer' barginin' at me!"

"My dear girl," said Dennis, "it would have made matters ten times worse if I had. I had my uniform to think of, I couldn't disgrace my uniform."

"So yo' mak' more count o' yo'r uniform nor yo'r friends," said she, tossing her head.

"Perhaps," he returned, sinking his voice, "it is because I do take thought for you, Alty, that I would not allow that man to discover us together."

As her eyes widened, he perceived his mistake and hastened to repair it.

"You see a girl doesn't poach, but a man might, and if this fellow, who knew you, found you in company with a poacher, it would have been much worse for you."

"Oh, I see," said Alty thoughtfully.

Her expression remained none the less uneasy and startled.

She detached her pinafore from the splinter and descended from her perch.

"Good evenin' to yo'," she remarked distantly.

But Dennis swung his long limbs over the barrier and followed her.

"Aren't you going to hear my story, Alty?"

"Nay," said Alty, "I'm goin' home."

"You promised!" urged he, with a hurt look.

"Well, then," returned she impatiently, "be quick, that's all."

Dennis looked round, his brow corrugating.

"How can I tell you things here in the middle of a turnip-field, with the wind blowing our heads off!" he exclaimed irritably. "Come back to the wood."

"No," said Alty, beginning to walk on again quickly. As he paced behind her on the narrow path, she continued: "Yo' heerd what I promised Mester Prescott."

"You promised me first," said Dennis, "you can't get out of that. You promised to meet me and to hear what I had to say."

Alty wheeled angrily. "I'm fair moldere'd between yo', I can't stop now. We've lost too much time in one thing or another, an' I'll not go back to wood an' break my word to keeper; but I'll meet yo' to-morrow some other place an' then yo' can say what yo' want to say, an' ha' done wi't."

There was a pause, during which Dennis looked away with a pained ex-

pression, his gaze finally reverting to her face.

"I suppose beggars mustn't be choosers," he said. "Where will you meet me, Alty? You must fix some quiet spot where we are not likely to be disturbed."

Alty pondered.

"There's the Withies pit," she announced, after a pause. "'Tis over yonder, see, where yon little green clump is; across Mill Hay an' t'other side o' Fazackerly's wheat-field. Nobry ever comes that gate on this time o' year. There's a bit o' shade there too," she added meditatively.

"Will you come there then, Alty, at the same time as we met to-day?"

She nodded.

"If I must, I must," she said.

"Is it such a penance as all that?" murmured Dennis in a low voice. "I wonder if you know how much you hurt my feelings?"

"I didn't go for to hurt your feelings," she answered penitently.

"I thought you were my friend," he went on in the same wounded tone. "I fancied you would take a little interest in my troubles."

"I do," said Alty; she hesitated, and at last burst out: "Eh, well, I may as well say what I have again yo'. I don't howd wi' folks as isn't straight-forr'ard."

As she did not vouchsafe to enter into details, Dennis was obliged to clear up the matter for himself.

"Because I didn't rush out when the keeper was there?" he cried, vexed.

"Ah," she admitted.

"I hope you're not obstinate, Alty," he went on in a superior tone. "I have already explained how I look at these matters, yet you go harking back. I had a special reason—an excellent reason—for not wishing the keeper to discover us together."

"What reason?" she cried quickly.

"I should think you might guess,"

returned he, throwing discretion to the winds in his wrath.

With his previous odd mixture of satisfaction and alarm, he saw her color and drop her eyes beneath his gaze.

"I think I'd best not come to Withies Pool," she said in a low voice.

Dennis threw out an admonitory forefinger.

"Your promise," he said.

"Eh, well, I'll come," she sighed resignedly.

"I hope," said Dennis, softening once more, "that when you have heard me out you may think better of me."

"I hope I may," said she. Her cheeks were still flushed, but when he took her hand he found it cold. As he pressed it incautiously she jerked it away.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," cried Dennis, discomfited. "I was forgetting our compact; but one generally does shake hands in saying good-bye, you know."

But Alty was already speeding away along the narrow path.

"Adorable creature!" said Dennis, apostrophizing her departing form.

Then he climbed up the stile and sat meditating.

(To be continued.)

## LOUIS BOTHA.

### A SOLDIER'S RECOLLECTIONS.

How long ago it seems since I, this great man's little enemy in the tented field, dubbed him officially "the sole link of the incoherent Boer forces"; and, unofficially, whatever hard terms may be expected from a young officer who has not seen home, a bed, or a square meal for three years, regarding the author of his exile. Yet it was not so long ago but that even now his name, refusing to connect itself with frockcoats and ministerial portfolios, conjures up instead visions of windy nights and blazing days on veld and kopje, recalls sounds of battle, of thousands marching across the drumming grass, of the tick-tack of the signalling-lamp which so often spelt out his magic name in the silence of the sleeping bivouac. "Botha!" It was a name to conjure with in those days, leading great armies up and down, this way and that, as if they were the slaves of a mesmerist's imperious whisper. Botha is here, Botha is there, Botha

is everywhere, is nowhere, is dead, is alive again, is utterly defeated, is terribly victorious—thus for a thousand days and more did hello, lamp, electric-wire and Rumor, swiftest and most lying jade of them all, lure the hopes and fears of an Empire, to say nothing of her troops, like a Will-o'-the-wisp from one slough to another in the great dreary moorland of war.

That is all over now. The Great Elusive, the man who could never be found, has become the most, perhaps the only fixed point in the bewildering kaleidoscope of South African affairs; and his stability to-day seems an even greater miracle than his magic vagrancy of thirteen years ago. Yet there is no more miracle or magic in either than the constant miracle of greatness in a little world, as constant but as rare as radium in the gross matter which compounds the whole. Right or wrong—and we have no politics here—Louis Botha is a great man, a *Canning*, as Carlyle said, or etymologically a *King*, being what a king is, or ought

<sup>1</sup> "The Official History of the War in South Africa."



to be, the "Man Who Can." It is one of the relics of a recently quitted Divinity, before men and matters fade into the common light of day, that youth alone is privileged to discern a Hero. And only a youthful State is able now to "find the ablest man that exists there and raise him to the supreme place." South Africa herself will lose the knack before much more water has flowed under the great Vaal Bridge. Prematurely forced into maturity in the hothouse of party politics, already she has shaken in his seat her ablest man, perhaps one of the ablest in the world, as never he was shaken by the heaviest strokes of war. But should he fall in the welter of civil strife, unlike the Duke of Wellington he will be remembered as a helmsman as bold and unerring amongst the shoals and reefs of peace as he was strong in the storm of battle.

New stars are discovered in the heavens often by accident, often by their influence upon visible bodies whilst they themselves are yet below the horizon. By both these means we early fighters in Natal, in the autumn days of 1899, were able to forecast some powerful agent at work below the dull sky of the Boer strategy, an agent which bade fair at times to gather the scattered luminaries of small successes into one baleful glare which would have utterly put out the flickering British cause. Prisoners taken in the very bosom of the colony averred that, had one man but had his way, Joubert's great raid, instead of stopping timorously on the Mooi, would have pierced the very heart of the British province, and turned the sea, her pride, into her grave. That man was Louis Botha, then a young officer chafing under the age and illness and fears of that very Schomberg of the time, poor old Piet Joubert.

A month later he had his chance;

but when the British army recoiled in one broken wave after another from the cliffs of Colenso, only a few knew that it was Botha who had laid out that tremendous line of defence; that it was he who, risking flat revolt, had ordered every Boer pony off the field, and with them the temptation to "retreat"; that it was his iron will alone which kept twelve thousand feverish Mausers silent until "the khakis" had crawled from distant to long-range, from long to medium, from medium to close, from close to "decisive." The single gun which spoke then was not more Botha's voice than the fearful clamor which burst in obedience to it.

Another month, and behold the burghers crouching defeated behind the hump of Spion Kop, "utterly exhausted, slipping away one by one, four whole commandos actually riding for the passes,"<sup>2</sup> Ladysmith as good as lost, and with it the whole campaign. But who is that who, "appearing apparently from nowhere," gallops, like Stonewall Jackson at Bull Run, bearded, jack-booted, his eyes blazing beneath his big slouch-hat, amongst the faltering ranks, commanding, shouting, threatening, until at last, to the infinite credit of the Boer soldiery, he "prevails upon many to return by pledging himself and them to a last desperate attempt to storm Spion Kop?" As all the world knows, no storm was needed; the hill was abandoned; and we, who, like the writer, had had the glory and anguish of witnessing that day's fighting, knew not then what Promethean fire had run amongst the commandos which had been turned to clay, until they burned for a fearful redemption of that pledge next dawn. We know now, however; it was Louis Botha.

Two months elapse this time, and we see the whole Boer army rushing pell-

<sup>2</sup> "The Official History of the War in South Africa."

mell from Ladysmith and the stricken field of Pieter's Hill, flying so fast on the wings of defeat that the Britons who had lain so long opposite their rifle-barrels now barely catch sight of their backs. Every gorge and drift is choked with transport, every hill and dale alive with hurrying horsemen. A semblance of pursuit would dash the Africander cause to fragments, for the bond of discipline, frail enough, is broken, and with it the patriotism which had largely supplied its place. Not quite. One man amidst the welter keeps up a soldier's heart, and a soldier's eye clear. "Luckily General Botha had deemed it his duty to form a rearguard and cover our retreat,"<sup>3</sup> and instead of troops of prisoners, "only a few tons of stores fell into the hands"<sup>4</sup> of the pursuing cavalry. In war, unlike peace, genius is as impossible to conceal as folly. Next day, at a council of war hurriedly convened by Joubert, there are loud calls for the instant nomination of Botha as second-in-command. The old General's formal acquiescence was almost his last public act. Soon after, worn out with worry and illness, he died, and Botha took the reins, "with the confidence and esteem of the whole Boer army."

But the team was bolting harder than that of Achilles, and for the moment deaf even to their hero's reviling. The fugitives were everywhere; the Free State was running as fast before Lord Roberts as the Transvaal before Sir Redvers Buller. Consequently, Botha was everywhere too; and it is from the far west that leaps out a little speech of his like a match struck in a dark room, an answer to a wavering officer despairing of the Republic: "You keep your spirits up and do your duty!"

At the very height of this *débâcle*,

<sup>3</sup> "Account of General Ben Viljoen."

<sup>4</sup> "The Official History of the War in South Africa."

when, above all, something sensational seemed wanted to stay the rout, there is a plot to blow up every gold-mine on the Rand. To the Boers these mines had always seemed the head and front of the British offending, for well they knew that, but for the gold, there would be no English in South Africa at all, least of all the exploiting, Semitic English whom they so hated and despised. Destroy the carcase, and the howling of the jackals would be heard no more in the land.

What a temptation to a little, short-sighted man, aye, even to a patriot. To a nation in the throes of dissolution can *anything* matter, ought anything to matter but that which may stave off death, even at the risk of perpetual paralysis thereafter? But amid the excited Babel which arose at this proposition one stern, calm voice made itself heard, forbidding this thing, the voice of Carlyle's "Noblest man . . . telling us to do precisely the wisest, fittest"—the voice of Louis Botha. We shall hear it again in circumstances of even greater stress. Should not South Africa rejoice that she hears it still, and take care lest, as men do with their Conscience, she banish it to the wilderness of disregarded things, a voice and nothing more?

Nor is this the only plot which the General has to overturn at this time. Away in Natal the British request an armistice for negotiation: with some subtlety, seeing that they are full in face of the most tremendous fortress on the continent, the historic and to them ill-omened Laing's Nek. Thereon, after their precipitate flight, the commandos seemed about to steady themselves, and it required a bold soldier indeed to warn them, as Botha promptly did by telegram, that there must be no truce since such could only cover some "deep stratagem" on the part of the enemy.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "The Official History of the War in South Africa."

Space compels us to hasten over the three years of heavy and incessant fighting which followed. Great battles there were, Doornkop, Diamond Hill, Bergendal, Belfast, Rhenoster Kop, extending over twenty, thirty, forty miles of front, with danger to the outnumbered burghers in every yard of every mile. When examining, as it was once the writer's duty to do, the multitudinous Boer accounts of these actions, it was remarkable to notice how many minor commanders seemed to have had speech at one time or another with the Commandant-General at the height of the fray. "He was in our immediate neighborhood," writes one; "here he took command in person"; "it was then that Botha persuaded the burghers to return"; heavy is the task of the "one man who restores the State."

Nor is the beaten leader always on the defensive; seldom, indeed, is he so. Long after the great campaign had broken up into a thousand jarring fragments, we catch a glimpse of the Commandant-General asleep beneath a mimosa-tree after an all-night ride. With a view to combining for a grand assault upon twenty miles of fortified railway, he is awaiting the arrival of an approaching colleague. The latter's aide-de-camp greets so bolsterously the Commander-in-Chief's own staff-officer that Botha is awakened. Little men, especially weary and worried little men, are excusably cross on such occasions. But Botha "rose immediately, and with his usual genial smile," welcomed the new arrival. Small wonder, then, that the latter "does not hesitate to call him a bosom-friend, with due respect to his Honor as his chief."<sup>6</sup> There is another glimpse, and again the sound of a manly voice when far-off Nylstroom hears "a stirring speech," a speech like the hoisting of an ensign on a sinking battleship.

<sup>6</sup> Account of General Ben Viljoen.

Poor Botha! Not knowing what impertinence it would be to pity a great and prosperous Minister of the Crown, we pitied him then, and still do; for we warrant that that wound in his great heart is not yet healed, will never heal. And be it remembered that the very keenness of his vision at that time rendered his agony the greater—"he, almost alone amongst his compatriots, had an eye to measure the disaster which had overtaken his country." But as that country weakens, he goes on from strength to strength. From the great commander he voluntarily resigns himself to be the leader of forlorn hopes. We see him storming at midnight into the very heart of Smith-Dorrien's entrenched camp at Lake Chrissie; we see him at Bakenlaagte leading two thousand furious horsemen across the open, to dash in hideous ruin the column of Benson, a hero like unto himself. We see him actually encompassing the reconquest of Natal when he possessed not an inch of his native soil which he could call his own. "Commandant Botha was still at large, and surrounded by adherents whose numerical weakness was never to be despised so long as they were inspired by his presence."<sup>7</sup>

Nor was he a paladin only amongst corporeal foes. Treachery of the most sickening kind besets him, and is withered by his contempt. He himself, hardest fight of all, has to bear up against muttered suspicion more cruel and baseless than any like calumny in history. His only reply is to dismiss summarily an influential and popular General for a breach of the laws of war, deaf to much clamor for his reinstatement; and to refuse terms of peace from the British such as have rarely been offered to a conquered people.

<sup>7</sup> "The Official History of the War in South Africa."

<sup>8</sup> "The Official History of the War in South Africa."

But when at length he saw that peace became inevitable as the only alternative to national extinction, Botha did more than ever before to save his country. Never had he risen higher than when he stood at the grave of the two Republics. He was not alone in this; there were spirits as noble as himself who stood by him in the terrible contest with the inflexible British commissioners on the one hand, and on the other those desperate colleagues who "urged the Burghers to seek independence in death rather than resign it living." Passionately he appealed to the first for better terms, to the latter to think of their country, not themselves. And when the deed was done, it was his sad and noble figure which rode from one commando to another all the country over, bidding them stack the rifles which had so often been unslung for victory at his word; worst of all, bidding them acknowledge King Edward VII. as their lawful Sovereign. There

*The Pall Mall Magazine.*

are some things even greater than his life that a man may lay down for his friends; and those who know the full history of Louis Botha, of which this is but a sketch, know how much more than life he sacrificed on that unspeakable last interview with his veterans. It is strange, and a little awful, to think that but a few years back we would have cheered to see this man stretched dead at our feet.

So much for the past. With the present we have here nothing to do; for that is "politics," as the past was once upon a time. Louis Botha can take care of himself to-day as well as ever he could; and we who met him on the veld have no little sympathy with those who venture out against him, or get in his way, in the forum! He is still the strong man armed, with the unsunderable weapons of valor, decision and fervor for the public weal as fast in his hand as Pendragon's sword in the anvil.

*"Linesman."*

## THE LITERARY PRESENTATION OF EVIL.

The complaint is frequently levelled at the modern stage and the modern novel that they are so largely concerned with the presentation of Sin and Evil as in themselves to be sowers of evil by familiarizing the imagination with wrong thoughts and actions, by projecting the abnormal on to the plane of the normal, by making vice a part of life instead of a part of death. That there is a large measure of truth in the allegation there can be no manner of doubt. There are novels published, there are plays played in the very name of art itself that are the malign reflections of wicked minds; novels and plays that are produced

not because they are realistic pictures of current society, nor because they are thongs with which to whip a reckless generation, but because the mind of the writer is perverted and loves evil. A censor cannot effectively deal with such productions, though he can check their grosser manifestations. But the most dangerous books and plays can often evade the censor with ease, and find their pernicious market without difficulty. The extent of that market is the exact measure of national morality. If it be wide, it means that there is indeed something rotten in the state of Denmark, some terrible cancer, destroying again, as it has often destroyed before, the soul and therefore the future of a people. It is pos-

<sup>9</sup> "The Official History of the War in South Africa."

sible to understand anxiety on this score. The responsibilities of England to-day are indeed enormous; her home responsibility to an immense and growing literate population including six million children; her foreign responsibility to untold millions of subject races, to daughter Dominions who largely fashion their moral tone on that of England, to foreign world-Powers who look to England for a standard of culture and civilization not less lofty than their own. It is possible to understand in the face of such responsibilities the fear of a decadency in drama, music, literature, and art that would measure Imperial decadency. But the danger of mere fear is not inconsiderable. To be afraid is not in itself a virtue. An Imperial people cannot be kept in a nursery. Evils must be faced and destroyed, not hidden away from sight, and perhaps the most effective instrument for purging out national sins is the drama. The horrible dangers of evil literature and art can best be met by a noble pulpit, by the scourge of the satirist, and by the fostering of healthy minds in the rising generation, by the setting of a high tone through the lives of the chief leaders of society.

If we can eliminate in this way what are the abnormal elements of art, it is possible to welcome, not discourage the fact that it is the fundamental business of all art to set forth the psychological struggle, deep in our human nature, of good and evil. The drama in the hands of the great masters has always performed this function, and indeed the history of the drama from those obscure beginnings that lie among the folk-plays of early peoples, shows that this struggle has been always the prime and ultimate theme. It is not without significance that the modern melodrama and pantomime bear scarcely less potently than the

greatest drama of ancient or modern times the stamp of their origin. Whether we have the "magic" drama of the Australian bushman, the folk-drama of Asiatic and European peoples, the miracle and moral plays of the Middle Ages, or the respective flowering of drama in its supreme fashion in Greece and England, we have still the presentation of the struggle between good and evil for the body, for the mind, for the moral nature, for the soul of man. Every stage of human progress presents us with this looking-glass for nations, and peoples, and men and women. When Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge wrote their wonderful play—recently rendered with extraordinary power by members of the Elizabethan Literary Society—*A Looking-Glass for London and England*, they knew what they were doing. Not only when Jonas the prophet denounces Nineveh and her king do we feel that modern evils are aimed at, not only when Nineveh repents do we feel the call for London to do likewise, but those brilliant dramatists, throwing from them or rather refusing to adopt the childish convention that art must never be consciously didactic, make the prophet, as the play ends happily in the Palace of Rasni, glide forward thousands of years in time, and warn the London that then was, and the London of all time, of the wrath to come. The play's the thing to touch the conscience of peoples and cities as well as of individuals. And for that reason, for that imperial reason, there is a duty upon the great actors of to-day to devote their gifts to the presentation of plays calculated to pierce the souls of men. The fashion of elaborate staging is wasteful as well as costly, for it obscures rather than aids great spiritual issues, and hides from the minds of the audience the true art of the actor.



The rapid growth of the taste for the plays of Shakespeare, here as in Germany, gives the stage manager his opportunity. The dramatist repeatedly dwells on the economy of material necessary to the production of his plays, and there can be no doubt that the effectiveness of at any rate the greater plays, is in inverse proportion to the elaboration of the staging. With this canon of production in mind, it is worth considering the growth of the use of evil as a dramatic factor in the mind and plays of Shakespeare. Of the early dramatic experiments culminating in 1594 with *The Merchant of Venice* and including *Romeo and Juliet*, a period of pure poetry, we may say this, that the poet is largely obsessed with the objectivity of good and evil, of love and hate, and contrasts them objectively and not without crudeness and weakness of dramatic construction. The profound thoughts have not ripened. The world had touched his mind and his muse rather than his personality. In the period from 1594 to 1600, the period beginning with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and ending with *Twelfth Night*, but including the Falstaff trilogy, we find the poet's dramatic power rapidly ripening, and we find also in the characters of Falstaff, Henry IV., and Henry V. a beginning of the psychological analysis of the conflict of good and evil. The character of Falstaff has not been sufficiently examined from this point of view. The psychology of Falstaff is a subject of extraordinary interest. He knows, as no previous character drawn by Shakespeare knows, the great deeps. The wonderful, the deathless, scene in which Mistress Quickly and the boy describe the death of Falstaff gives us the light in which we must read the character of the man. "How now, Sir John?" cried I. 'What, man! be o' good cheer.' So a' cried out, 'God,

God, God!' three or four times." It is almost the first touch of conscience in the Shakespearean drama, and it leads us into the spirit of the great plays. In *Julius Caesar* we see the results of evil done that good may come of it, a perpetual lesson for statesmen. Seven years were to pass before Shakespeare in *Antony and Cleopatra* drove home the correlative lesson that the absence of character in politics is an even worse evil than the absence of judgment. These two plays, exhibiting as they do the salient evils that afflict public life, form indeed a looking-glass for statesmen.

With *Hamlet*, in 1603, the dramatist took up another phase of the same problem. From the point of view of evil in public life the play fitly stands between *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, but the tragedy opens up a new and more intimate psychology, the devastating atmosphere of sin. To speak of Hamlet as mad is to miss the whole point of the play. The sin of Gertrude and Claudius involved worse things than madness: it destroyed faith, hope, love, brotherhood, all but conscience. With *Othello*, in the next year, we reach the fearful figure of Iago, the only study of absolute evil that Shakespeare ever attempted. Whether the figure is justified in human nature or not one dare not say, for Shakespeare drew the character when almost at his prime. But the repulsiveness of evil has never been elsewhere so adequately depicted. The true motive of the play is not so much the almost resistless power of jealousy, as the terrible depths of wickedness to which human nature can reach, "more fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea." In 1604, we have also *Measure for Measure*, where the sin of self-righteousness and the hypocrisy that it involves is scarified, whether in the individual or the statesman. Two years later came probably the

greatest of the plays from the point of view of construction, *Macbeth*, a tragedy that exhibits with unique insistence and with every outward presentation of horror the spiritual significance of sin—in this case the sin of ambition in twin devoted souls—to the individual soul. Macbeth and his wife gave all for nothing. "What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed."

"And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more; it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing."

With *King Lear*, in 1607, we reach the climax of the presentation of evil, of all that sin and evil connote, involve,

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compel. But in all these plays there shines out the ultimate human power of resisting evil, of overcoming it with good, of proving that the eternal thing is goodness and not evil. The fundamental difference between Greek and English tragedy is that in the latter man is, in the former man is not, master of his fate. Against the black or lurid background of sin shine out the exquisite creations, mostly women, who prove that light and love are more than conquerors. It is not without significance that incarnate evil in the person of Iago ends upon the phrase: "From this time forth I never will speak word." The last plays of Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, and, above all, *The Tempest*, show us, in passages, where the lyric note is thrilled in the ripe glow of sunset, where music is touched with serene personality, that the time must come when all things are made even, when Sin and Evil will never more "speak word."

J. E. G. de M.

## THE BOWL OF ROSES.

### III.

Other roses followed, so did James. Her husband's passionate anxiety not to hurt anyone's feelings vanquished Mrs. Robinson. She would have stood firm if she could have guessed the degree of dread which that very anxiety indicated, but she was no more aware of that than he was himself.

Mr. Robinson had a genuine respect and admiration for James Cruden, but for many years he had been concealing from himself the fact that there was no one and nothing in the world that he disliked so much as his excellent brother-in-law. "But, after all," he said to himself as he touched the crimson petals of the roses, "I have so much to be thankful for."

James made them both feel somehow that the end was very near. There was a solemn whispering tact in his manner towards his sister-in-law that almost suggested to her that the funeral was to-morrow. It might be stupid of her to want to forget the sorrow that was coming so soon, but it was depressing to be made to realize it quite so clearly.

Mr. Robinson was not destitute of diplomacy in a small way where other people's feelings were concerned, and he was careful to tell his wife the night his brother-in-law arrived that dear James was really exceedingly kind, because no doubt one often did find dear James less trying just at first. But the blend of unnatural

brightness and muffled solemnity of the visitor's bedside manner was trying to his nerves, and the second night after his arrival James succeeded in giving the invalid a thoroughly bad night.

His conversation through the day had been very largely occupied with his ministerial successes, and this depressed Mr. Robinson with a consciousness of his own failures; and he lay awake in the melancholy half-light of the night-light thinking how very different he might and ought to have been. For Mr. Robinson had no illusions about himself. He knew that he was a dull preacher, and that he had been too long in his parish. He could work and he could visit, but he could not organize or start new things. And he was out-of-date: he could never talk slang or slap anyone on the back. Once he had said that something was "ripping," and he blushed to think how flat it had fallen. He had gone into the young men's parish club-room with the firm intention of slapping some one on the back, but everyone stopped talking when he came in, as they so often did, and his arm had hung nerveless at his side.

Then he was by nature shy and diffident—he regarded both qualities as his besetting sin—and his courage had been put to an impossible strain, for he had been brought up to regard it as his duty to ask his neighbor in train or tram if he or she were saved. Only once or twice in his life had he risen to this ideal of duty; it more often ended in his merely offering to hold a heavy basket for a tired woman on his right, or in words of eager gratitude on being reminded of his umbrella by the possible son of perdition on his left.

He was sadly conscious of inadequacy as a saver of souls, and in the small hours of the morning his thoughts

turned to a particular instance where lately he had tried and failed. He saw himself once again under a gas-lamp somewhere near a theatre, and he saw a girl beautiful, but obviously painted, and with tears on her cheek. He had passed her, and then, after a moment's agony of prayer and wrestling with himself, he had turned back and spoken to her. He could not at all clearly remember what he had said, the anguish of shyness had wiped it from his mind, but he knew that it had been something quite inadequate, nothing heart-searching, nothing to bring her to repentance. He had felt overwhelmingly sorry for her and had said something to that effect. And when the effort had been so painful it seemed such a pity that he had failed. He thought of the use that the kind of person he was not would have made of the opportunity. As the weary night wore on he prayed for the unhappy woman: it was all he could do now.

The bad night was not a very good preparation for James next day, and for the various restless plans he kept on formulating for the sick man's benefit. How nice it would be, for instance, if Mr. Grigson, and Grey, and dear old Timmins could come together and hold a little prayer-meeting in the sick-room. Mr. Robinson had reminded himself once or twice that day that "no man dieth to himself," but he felt and looked disappointingly blank at the suggestion, and said limply that he would refer the matter to Dr. Enfield, who might be coming that evening.

"You know, Latimer, as you seem to have taken a fancy to this young man . . ."

"I don't know that I have taken a fancy to him," broke in Mr. Robinson nervously. "He is being very kind to me, and one always feels a deep interest in a young fellow with life before

him, and with such gifts." And he sighed.

"Well, I only hope he won't misuse his gifts," rejoined the other sententiously. "From what I hear it's only too probable. I told you, I think, that I heard he was mixed up with a young widow of doubtful character—or was it an actress?—Quite possibly both!"

Mr. Robinson winced. Not only did he dislike the censorious tone of the speech, but he began to have misgivings lest there should be some truth in the suggestion. James might be uncharitable, the gossip he had heard might be based on a misunderstanding, yet his own doctor, who entertained the warmest admiration for Enfield, had spoken of him one day in a way that implied a misgiving; and though Mr. Robinson's knowledge of the world was elementary, he had noticed before now that a certain volume of smoke often betokens a fire of some sort.

"Still," he said, "even if the young man's life was not quite satisfactory, I don't see that one can do anything except, of course, . . ."

"Well, what I mean is that, considering that he has taken a fancy to you, apparently, might you not regard it perhaps, my dear brother, as a precious opportunity?"

For James Cruden was annoyed at being made to feel uncharitable.

It seemed to Mr. Robinson that a yawning gulf had opened at his feet. "No doubt you are right," he said faintly; "I never thought of that."

Then his brother-in-law thought he looked tired, and touched with a vague compunction, he told him that he must not worry about that or anything else, and that he would leave him to rest with the door ajar in case he wanted anything.

At first Mr. Robinson could only feel intensely wretched, and checked himself for wishing that when Dr. Enfield

came to-night he would find him dead. Then he said to himself that sufficient for the day was the evil thereof, and that after all dear James had gone downstairs and he was alone. Then he did a thing that he knew was very ridiculous indeed. He made a little well in the bed-clothes just below his pillow; then he lifted the bowl of roses from the table by his side and so arranged it in the folds that the petals almost touched his face. It was very sentimental and extravagant of course, but he did long so to have those lovely fragrant silent things close to him; and it would only be for a few minutes, and no one need find out.

The roses were that morning's gift, and he wondered again who the giver was. His wife had admitted to having caught a glimpse of her, and had said a little drily that she had a pretty face. Mr. Robinson had sometimes thought his wife a little unkindly prejudiced against a pretty face. "After all," as he had once suggested, "it is one of those things that cannot be helped." Whereupon Mrs. Robinson had retorted that for her part she thought a lot of it could very often. She probably thought so now, and that was why her tone had been a little dry. Fortunately it would never have occurred to her husband that a woman who painted herself, which was his old-fashioned description of "making-up," would leave flowers on a dying clergyman. But he told his wife that if the lady ever did express any wish to see him he should not like her to be refused. For he had a vague feeling that she was in trouble: he connected her somehow with the young lady with the sad beautiful face whom he had seen that day when he consulted Dr. Enfield.

The next thing that he was conscious of was a feeling of dampness, and then a pair of humorous tired eyes looking into his own. The doc-

tor was mopping the sheet, and the bowl with the roses a little disarranged was on the table again.

"I meant to pay you a surprise visit, and I seem to have come in the nick of time," said Enfield, and softly and deftly he arranged a towel over the wet sheet, deaf to the patient's incoherent apologies and shamefaced explanations. "No, it's all right. Don't ring the bell; I don't want anybody. I always do that sort of thing when I have influenza. What with spilling vases and cigarette ash I'm never fit to be seen. So you've been asleep. That's right."

Enfield had told Dr. Ducker that he was interested in watching the effect of a new anodyne he was trying on Mr. Robinson, but that was not all the reason why he came; he was also interested in making further acquaintance with the most patient person he had ever come across, who was possessed of that "exceedingly useful backyard" and of absolutely no sense of humor. The little incident of the rose-bowl brought Mr. Robinson still more within range of his difficult sympathies. The man was a crank, a piteous crank, but a crank with delightful humanities.

That bare, gloomy, poverty-stricken bedroom with its little gas fire, its drab wallpaper, its threadbare carpet, the gray view of sky and housetops to be seen over the white-shrouded windows, the faded photographs upon the wall, the framed text above the gas-bracket, "Be not weary in well-doing,"—these things, and the sick man's evident pleasure in seeing him, stirred a deeper emotion of pity and humility within him than he had experienced for many years.

He was gravely and sympathetically attentive to Mr. Robinson's diffident account of himself, and when it was clear to him that he did not want to dwell further on his symptoms he

talked in a light amusing way about a hospital experience of the day before, and made his patient laugh with real amusement for the first time for many weeks.

"I won't talk to him about his soul to-day," thought Mr. Robinson, "he is being so pleasant, and I'm so tired. I'll just try to talk to him about himself."

"It's so nice of you to come to see me," he said. "It's so very delightful to have a visitor."

"Don't you have plenty of visitors?"

"Oh, yes, yes. I didn't mean that exactly. People look in, only when they know one is dying I think it makes them a little shy and awkward. Oh, my curate comes in quite often to consult me about things, and my dear wife is never long absent, and then I have my brother-in-law staying with me."

"Is he the parson I met in the hall?"

"Yes, it would be. But a most excellent man and exceedingly kind."

"Oh, no doubt; that's the way with relations; but the drawback to them in illness, I find, is that they are mixed up with all sorts of worrying things that are all very important and nice, but which you don't want to think about just then."

"Now, how true that is—how perfectly true! And yet there is nothing like family life and family ties, is there?"

"Nothing whatever, I should imagine," said Enfield in a tone that was carefully expunged of all dryness.

"And yet . . . yet you are not married?"

"No, I've kept clear of matrimony so far," said Enfield airily.

"You will, I hope, pardon me for suggesting that I think that is a pity." Mr. Robinson sounded very much in earnest.

"You think so?"

The question was asked simply by



way of saying something in order to keep a straight face in view of the mental picture of the joys of married life with Mrs. Robinson; but the effort to sound grave invested his voice with a solemnity which misled his hearer.

"I do think so," Mr. Robinson said with much grave sweetness, as he laid his large bony hand gently on the doctor's sleeve. "Marriage can be such a very happy thing, that I don't think it's to be lightly foregone. And you know, with your cleverness and your attractions, you would be able to win the affections of the sort of girl who can make a man so very happy. I don't mean to say, of course, that there are no trials even in a happy marriage, but there is a greater blessedness, and the ties are such sweet and wholesome ties."

Enfield felt as if he had unwittingly walked into the middle of a fire; he had not felt so acutely uncomfortable for a long time, and he did not feel the less uncomfortable that he did not conceive it possible that Mr. Robinson could know anything about his private life. He was secretive and cautious, and if his mother suspected things, she lived in London, had few acquaintances in Longborough, and had every reason to keep her tearful suspicions to herself. Generally he found no difficulty in snubbing people, but to snub this particular person was not to be thought of. The miserable perplexities of his moral position crowded upon him, and a short night's rest followed by a busy morning helped to make them overwhelming. There came a lump in his throat; he released his arm from Mr. Robinson's fingers, rose, and crossed to the fireplace and gazed at a photograph of parish workers with unseeing eyes. His action and his silence cried aloud of trouble. Mr. Robinson said nothing, but there was a force outside himself compelling the

young man to speak which he was too clever to understand.

"I know, of course, that there's a lot in what you say," he said hoarsely, "but you don't understand. There's such a thing as caring for a woman you can't marry, isn't there?"

"That is very difficult and painful." Mr. Robinson's voice ached with sympathy as he spoke.

"It's quite abominably difficult and painful; but I really don't know why I should bother you with my difficulties."

"I know something of the difficulty myself," said Mr. Robinson, turning a little pink.

Enfield dropped the eyeglass with which he had been surveying "your sincere well-wishers the Sunday School Teachers of St. Botolph's,"—he dropped it very suddenly, and said "Indeed" in a voice which was creditably uncolored by surprise.

"Years ago," went on Mr. Robinson softly, but with evident effort, "many, many years ago I was engaged to be married to a very sweet young girl. She—she met some one else, a more attractive man than I was. At first nothing seemed worth living for; I was so unhappy that I should have been glad to die. And then she married him and I had to tear the thought of her out of my heart; and I think that was more difficult even than doing without her. Well, it didn't seem possible to put any heart into one's work or to live for other people, but with God's help it did become possible. I lived it down, and then other blessings came. It mayn't have been just the life one had planned for oneself; but after all one knew that one had done right, and there's nothing that's quite such a comfort as that." And pain and nervousness melted in the last words into a tone of great satisfaction.

"You're a very good man," said the

doctor a little huskily, when Mr. Robinson had ended. He was on the verge of saying, "But the trouble is that I'm not," but a look at his patient decided him that rather than worry the poor old thing any more he must continue to be a fraud, and he sat down again by the bedside and said instead, "It's awfully nice of you to talk like this and to care about my happiness, but you mustn't upset yourself, you know." And he took his patient's pulse in such a final and professional manner that it was difficult for Mr. Robinson to believe that he had a private life at all.

"Those are beautiful roses," said Enfield. "I saw some like them in the market this morning."

"Do you often buy flowers?"

The doctor inwardly cursed himself for a silly ass, and perhaps his expression was not quite so professional as he replied: "Yes, fairly often: I'm keen on flowers. Why I must have dropped one of the roses at the period of the deluge. There's a beauty there by the table-leg. Let's rescue it."

The rescue involved Enfield's groping for it on all-fours, and Mr. Robinson was too busy protesting and apologizing and telling him how exceedingly kind he was to notice anything peculiar in the doctor's look when, having recovered the rose, he stood gazing at it. It was a white rose with a curious green flaw on one of the petals. But the professional man and the clever man completely disappeared as he looked at it, and left nothing behind but youth and wonder and dismay.

"Where did the roses come from?" he asked. His voice was a little constrained, which was hardly surprising as he was quite certain that he had bought that particular bunch of roses in the flower-market that morning.

"Well, that's the strange part of it,"

said Mr. Robinson a little shyly, "for I don't know at all. For the last month a lady has left me some roses every week; these came this morning. It is more than kind of her, for they must be expensive now."

"I daresay she can afford it; they are not always expensive." Enfield proceeded to take out his pen and write a prescription, and Mr. Robinson was so relieved that he had not perpetrated one of those jokes James was so fond of about "the mysterious admirer" or the "fair unknown," that he did not observe that Enfield's tone was a little grim.

The prescription took some thought. The thoughts ran as follows: "Supposing I do it and blow public opinion! I should never like that nice wholesome girl I might marry one half so well, and she wouldn't love me half so well either. Oh, but what would the Mater say! And oh, I wonder, I do wonder what Mr. Robinson would say! I'm not at all sure that he wouldn't give me his blessing. But what a madman I am!"

"No, I quite understand, Mr. Robinson; but it won't impair your faculties in any way: just make you a little more comfortable, I hope. You'll still be able to enjoy the roses and do a little match-making for me. They must ring me up to-morrow if you don't feel so well."

When Enfield had gone Mr. Robinson's eyes filled with tears. The young man was a dear fellow, a very dear fellow, but he felt convinced now that all was not well with him. He must try to speak more definitely to him about his soul to-morrow; a more able person in his place would have done so to-day, no doubt. "And he won't understand," he thought; "and he'll think it a poor return for all his kindness."

Still God would provide a way: he would take comfort in that.

IV.

When Mr. Robinson realized that he had forgotten to ask the doctor's leave to have the "gathering of old friends" in his room, he felt obliged to atone for the omission by calling it an exceedingly nice idea and imploring James to make all necessary arrangements. When he also found that these arrangements caused their organizer to be absent from the house for the whole morning he saw the hand of Providence very clearly in the whole affair, and would like to have put a shilling in the box for "unexpected mercies," only he was afraid that it might seem to imply that he was not very fond of dear James.

The prayer-meeting was to be at half-past five, but early in the afternoon Mrs. Robinson had telephoned to Enfield to say that she did not think her husband so well. The patient was not conscious himself of feeling worse; he was a little drowsy, but that was "that young man's fault."

As the twilight drew on he asked his wife to light the small lamp on the table where the bowl of roses stood. "We won't have the gas just yet, if you don't mind being idle for a little." And while he seemed to be sleeping she sat beside him till the lights of the town began to twinkle and the smoke of far-off furnaces to glow upon the horizon. The light of the little lamp and the roses beside it seemed a protest of life and color in the gathering darkness of the room.

There came a ring at the door-bell, and he opened his eyes and said:

"Go down, dear, will you, and see who it is."

She thought it was the doctor, but the little maid met her in the hall with a sheaf of lilies in her arms. "It's the lady," she said; "she's asking after the master and she's brought these."

Mrs. Robinson brushed past the girl

and went to the door, where she saw a beautiful young woman with handsome furs and an expression of frightened sadness.

"I'm so sorry," she stammered: "I'm afraid Mr. Robinson is worse."

"He would like to see you," said Mrs. Robinson with set face and voice. "Will you come this way?"

The beautiful young woman followed, nervous and reluctant, but helpless to argue. As they passed through the little hall a door opened and James Cruden, looking very solemn and important, tiptoed into the passage.

"I am sure you will understand, my dear Madam," he said with pompous sadness, "but Mr. Robinson is exceedingly ill: it is hardly fitting, I think . . ."

"He wishes to see this lady—that is enough," Mrs. Robinson said coldly. "She has been very kind."

"But you don't understand," broke in the girl desperately, a flood of crimson suffusing her face. "This gentleman is quite right: it's not fitting. I'm the actress, Vivien Ellis. No doubt you've heard all about me, and more than all." Then less bitterly, but with a quiver in her voice, she added: "Mr. Robinson once did me a kindness; but, of course, I can't see him."

She turned from the astonished stare of James Cruden, and made as if to go, but Mrs. Robinson laid a hand upon her arm, and said firmly: "No, I know he wants to see you. Will you please come upstairs?"

Mr. Robinson was not asleep, but he felt strangely drowsy, and things seemed unreal and far away. Sometimes the room would seem dark, sometimes it would be full of a mysterious light; sometimes there would be the sound of voices, sometimes it was very silent and there was nothing to be heard but his uneven breathing. But he heard his wife quite distinctly when she said, "The lady who brought

the roses is here; would you like to see her?"

"Yes," said Mr. Robinson faintly, "I should. Let her come in."

Mrs. Robinson motioned to the trembling girl to come forward, and then left them alone together.

Mr. Robinson saw his visitor clearly as she passed by the lamp before coming into the shadow by the bedside. He did not know that she was Vivien Ellis, nor that she was the woman he had seen in the street that night: he only knew quite certainly that she was a sinner and unhappy.

"You have been so kind to me," he said feebly. "What has made you so kind to me?"

She knelt by his side and said softly and brokenly: "You were once very good to me. I am an actress, and one night after I had been acting I was standing at the stage-door waiting for someone; and I had been crying, for I was very unhappy, and you stopped to speak to me. I wasn't what you thought I was, but I don't think I was much better, for I was spoiling a good man's life. You touched me on the arm and said, 'God help you, my child, and God bless you.' And when you had turned away, you'd been so good and so kind, suddenly I saw that everything was all wrong and I've never been happy since." And she wept.

"My child, you have left Him, but you must go back to Him."

"I can't go back to him now," she whispered; "he's dead."

"No, but He's alive—He's alive for evermore. And, my dear, He wants you."

The voice was very tender, very remote.

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"But you don't know," she sobbed. "I'm wicked. I love some one so much and he can't marry me, he mustn't marry me. It's so hard to give him up."

"But if you love him, my child, if you love him, nothing's too hard. . . . And God loves him better than you can."

There seemed an anguished whisper of "Vivien" that beat against her brain; but she turned a deaf ear to it as she cried: "I'll give him up. Oh, yes, I'll give him up. Only, because I love him so, when you are with God you'll remember me?"

She kissed the wasted hand, and her tears fell upon it as he murmured his faint "God bless you!"

"Vivien!" And she looked up now with a start of dismay. In the gloom at the opposite side of the bed stood Stephen Enfield, his fingers on his patient's wrist, his flushed and troubled face turned towards her. It was only for a brief second that he looked at her before he said softly, "Tell her to come!" but in that second that their eyes met she saw something very new and strange. Through the tears in her own eyes she saw the tears in his.

She rose, and with one swift backward look of awestruck pity went softly and quickly out of the room.

Enfield knelt down by the bedside and supported the dying man's head on his arm, and Mr. Robinson looked up into his face with a last flicker of pleasure in his fading eyes as he said:

"That was the dear lady who has been so kind to me; the lady who brought the roses."

*Newton Adams.*

## CUBA AND ITS PRESIDENT.

I remember prophesying in these pages some eighteen months ago that the election of such a man as General Mario Menocal to the Presidency of Cuba would mean in many ways a new start for the island. A recent visit to Havana has strengthened my faith in the forecast—has convinced me indeed that it is already being realized. President Menocal stands almost as much apart from and above the ordinary run of Cuban politicians as President Wilson stands apart from and above the ordinary run of American politicians. Cuban-born, educated in the United States, a fiery and daring guerrilla leader in the war against Spain, by profession a civil engineer, for many years the working head of the largest sugar estate in the island, and at all times an indefatigable sportsman, General Menocal has long enjoyed the affection of the mass of his countrymen and the confidence of the business interests. The election of 1912 that installed him in the Palace was remarkable for two things. It was the first election held under purely native auspices that passed off quietly, and that led neither to American intervention nor to anything approaching a domestic "revolution." Even though it ended in that ever-fertile source of Spanish-American tumult, a transference of power from one party to the other, the verdict of the polls was accepted in peace. Nobody took to the woods. The defeated Liberals grumbled, but they did nothing else. The six anxious months that separate the election of a Cuban President from his accession to office went by in a calm that was almost uncanny. The whole conduct of the campaign and its significant lack of the accustomed sequel, showed that the Cuban people were gradually laying up a solid reserve of

political character and capacity. And, in the second place, the election of 1912 was remarkable in that it ended in the triumph of the most distinguished and experienced man of affairs in the island. The Cubans have had little opportunity of developing a talent for business and commerce on a large scale or for handling important competitive undertakings. As lawyers, doctors, professional men, clerks, and subordinate employés, they reach a high average of proficiency. But I have met comparatively few of them in positions of undivided trust and responsibility, and directing big enterprises on their own initiative. Speaking broadly, the retail business of Cuba is in the hands of the Spaniards, while the larger undertakings are owned and managed by Americans, Englishmen, and Germans. Here and there Cubans are beginning to emerge with a high aptitude for commercial and financial organization and business administration. But the group is still a very limited one, and of those who compose it General Menocal, as the managing director of the Cuban-American Sugar Company, has been so easily the most prominent as to seem to belong to a class by himself. It was something like a record in Spanish-American politics that the Cubans should have chosen for their President the best man they possessed.

But managing an enormous sugar estate is one thing; being a successful President of Cuba is another, and a very different, thing. The first is a position of all but absolute autocracy; the second is a position that asks from its occupant a high degree of flexibility, almost infinite patience, and an extraordinary skill in the handling of men. No President, and least of all a Cuban President, can expect to have



his own way. He is obliged to advance very gingerly, a step, or half a step, at a time, in order to avoid creating enmities that might wreck his whole Administration. It was no small part of the interest of my trip to Cuba to observe on the spot how President Menocal was meeting problems and a situation so different from those he had been accustomed to confronting and solving in his former sphere. It did not take long to be sure that he was shaping admirably—that, though a novice to the game, he was quickly mastering it; and that, beneath his quiet manner and unemotional speech, there lay a courage and tenacity that, in the long run, would prove equal to all emergencies. The President has the priceless asset of character. He is the very opposite of a self-seeker. Not even in the reckless gossipings of the Havana cafés has it ever been suggested that he sought the Presidency for what he could make out of it. There is a vein of genuine altruism in his nature; he is, I should say, an exceedingly difficult man to move when convinced that he has right and justice on his side; and his devotion to Cuba bears the stamp of a complete disinterestedness. He has pondered those deeper problems of her life and conditions that find, as a rule, so small a place in the polemics of party. He has studied and understands her permanent needs; he is thinking of Cuba while most of those around him are thinking of jobs and concessions and the petty manœuvres of "politics." Whether these characteristics are the ones that are most helpful in the special circumstances of Cuban public life, time alone can prove. But already it is clear that the accession of a President of General Menocal's manifest integrity and highmindedness has had a wholesome effect on the political atmosphere. There is very little talk of "graft" in Havana nowadays. People

feel that, so long as General Menocal is in the Palace the Government will be honestly run, concessions will only be granted on their merits, and every effort will be made to give Cuba a clean, stable, and economical administration.

Neither, it can safely be affirmed, is there the least fear of anything resembling a "revolution." The opinion is universal that Cuba has got beyond that stage. There may be—there are pretty certain to be—political deadlocks and complications of one sort or another, but of serious disorder there is, so far as I could see, no possibility whatever. Moreover the United States Government, as I was able to ascertain in Washington, has implicit confidence in General Menocal. It has already abandoned the habit of meddling on every pretext, and often on none at all, in the details of Cuban administration; and the Cubans themselves, as they become politically more efficient, furnish less and less excuse for external interference. The island today is a really self-governing country, and committed to the care of one of its ablest and most upright citizens. And if its political prospects are thus auspicious, so also are the auguries for its material prosperity. Cuba is going rapidly ahead. Every year sees more land laid down in sugar which, even at the current low prices, now produces a crop worth over £20,000,000 a year. Communications of all kinds—railways, telegraphs, telephones, highroads, bridges, and so on—are being systematically extended; and the railways especially in which British capital is mainly interested are enjoying, thanks to bumper sugar and tobacco crops, a time of exceptional prosperity, which will be still further increased by the policy of amalgamation now being wisely pursued. The cities are equipping themselves with all the accessories and conveniences of up-to-

date communities. Throughout the island the price of real estate is continuously rising, and when the Panama Canal is opened Cubans look forward to a time of all-round development. Already their foreign trade amounts to very nearly £60,000,000 a year—about £30 per head of the population—and the revenue of the Republic for the

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current fiscal year is estimated at over £8,000,000. They have of course problems of their own to solve—there, as elsewhere, statistical prosperity is far from being synonymous with social health—but on the whole I do not know any country of the size of Cuba with greater actual and potential wealth or with a more assured future.

*Sydney Brooks.*

### THE SIMPLE LIFE.

The main fact about the Simple Life is, of course, that it is not simple. The evidence of the exhibition held in London just now is emphatic on that point. The Simple Life, as understood to-day, could only exist in a highly complex civilization. It is a thing of deliberate intent, of anxious calculation and corroding care. It demands eternal self-consciousness. Without perpetual effort the Simple Liver must fall away from grace. Other people may enjoy some time "off." The financier is not always financing; the Socialist spouter sometimes ceases to talk about the proletariat; the professional lion-tamer can go home and feed his rabbits when the day's work is done. But the consistent Simple Liver can never take holiday. He is forever on the strain. It is so fatally easy not to be simple.

The Simple Life and Open Air Exhibition just held in London has been in some ways a revelation. It shows the reality of that "nearer to nature" boom which may be regarded, perhaps, as a sign of health, since in a rather long-eared way it represents a rebellion from the old Victorian theory of the world as a mere market and workshop. Tradesmen do not take up such movements out of philanthropy or eccentricity, and the vast quantity of things shown indicates a real demand for the apparatus of outdoor holiday-

ing, as well as a continued craze for out-of-the-way articles of diet. The full enjoyment of the Simple Life, it would seem, is not to be attained without a wealth of appliance. Every Simple Liver seems to be a veritable White Knight in the completeness of his equipment for all emergencies. In the matter of soft collars alone he has seventeen different varieties, all starchless and germless, to choose from. The really simple thing, of course, would be to go without a collar altogether. Though in that case we must not wear a necktie; for, as Dickens said, a man never knows what a bounder he can look till he wears a little black bow and no collar.

A collar is not necessary to happiness or to beauty, though it is true that to the modern eye the neck that lacks a collar always seems to clamor for a halter. But the Simple Liver never does the simple thing. His natural bent is to complication. Hence in all things meant for him we see ingenuity carried to maddening lengths. His camp equipment is a miracle of intricacy. He is furnished with things that are beds by night and tables by day, and which are apt to change from the one to the other on any chance jar. It is the same with diet. The Simple Life is mainly nourished on foods which have travelled very far from the raw material. The Simple

Liver of old time slew his own sheep or ground his own grain. The Simple Liver of to-day is supported mainly out of tins or cardboard packets, supplied probably from American factories. In all directions, indeed, the Simple Life is strangely dependent on the complex life of modern industrialism. One caravan nomad, at this exhibition, boasted of "tasting the delights of the tramp's life without the attending discomforts." But this happy result was only to be achieved by relying wholly on common people who go to work in unhygienic clothes, who eat beef and cooked vegetables without shame, and who sleep in the usual stuffy bed. Clearly, if the Simple Life is a revolt against super-civilization, it is also content with an abject reliance on the system it contemns.

What, too, has the Simple Liver to do with gramophones? It seems that a gramophone is a quite ordinary part of the equipment of a Simple Life holiday party. It is pleasant to think of these people, who pant for closer communion with nature, packing up a gramophone with their camping outfit. We may imagine the caravan drawn up by the side of a darkling wood, London and its shamefully complex life left far behind. The patent spirit lamp is unshipped and lighted, the aluminum kettle brought to boil, the chemical coffee made, the nut cutlets and the dessicated bananas consumed. And then, under the majestical roof fretted with golden fire, with the Pleiads winking approval, the gramophone is set up, and the voice of Mr. Harry Lauder or Mr. Wilkie Bard mocks the dark silences. The Simple Life, in some cases, seems to have close affinities with the Cockney life.

The craze is, of course, only an extreme manifestation of the general tendency of the townsman to seek the country—a tendency closely associated with the invention of the motor-car.

The caravan in which some middle-class people live, savagely enough, for six months at a time is the makeshift equivalent of the week-end place of the rich city man. It may be questioned whether the fashion is altogether good either for the country or for the town. Round about London it has certainly given to some pleasant country districts, once the home of a fine peasantry, a rather disagreeable, parasitic character. It has raised prices, shortened the supply of cottage accommodation, and encouraged a cadging and tip-expectant spirit. Nor is the effect on the townsman, apart from a possible gain of health, altogether satisfactory. He has not become a real countryman, and he has ceased to be a whole-hearted townsman. There is a certain dignity in the self-satisfied and impenitent Cockney. We should not have liked Johnson half as well if he had been a habitual week-end; and Dickens's removal to Gad's Hill always seems an artistic mistake. The wider social effects of the week-end habit may be found important. There is some reason to suspect that the relations of employer and employed have on the whole grown less intimate and less cordial during the last two decades. Will the historian of fifty years hence seek an explanation in the passion for week-ending and the facilities for leaving town the moment business is finished?

The weakness of the modern passion for the Simple Life is that it has little to do with a real healthy love of the country. It has no sympathy either with country work or with country sport. The taste for farming as an amusement has not grown. The present-day townsman shows little interest in hunting and field sports generally. He brings his own town games and his own town companions with him. He has not, in fact, like the townsmen of former generations, be-

come absorbed by the country; he has simply scattered bits of London over the face of the Home Counties. His rural life is not the life of Arcady. It has more likeness to the week-ending of decadent Rome. We can show to-day smaller counterparts of those sublime Cockneys of the Augustan period who, running out of town after a few weeks of dining out, wrote poetic descriptions of the happiness of the rustics, "were they but conscious of it": who rhapsodized over the view from Surrentum, or offered tribute to the

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reposeful charms of Sirmio. The country was to these illustrious Romans what the country is to Londoners to-day, and their conception of the Simple Life was much as ours—a thing only enjoyable as long as it is more or less a sham. "Back to nature" is the townsman's cry. The countryman may love the country well, and never desire to leave it; but he rarely indulges in "gush" on the subject. Men are not in the habit of writing ballads to their wives' eyebrows.

### AMERICAN MEN AND AMERICAN WOMEN.

A Frenchwoman on leaving the United States last week delivered an opinion on American men and women which we see recorded in the *Observer*. She had visited the United States as the agent of a well-known Parisian firm of dressmakers, and she had found that there was very little to teach American women in the art of dressing themselves. It may be that this was why—we are not sure that this sounds reasonable, but perhaps it is not necessary to look for reason in the explanation—she turned on the men and abused them:—

"New York is a land of beauties and beasts. Women are wonderful, but men are simply awful. Your men dress like rag-pickers. One sees a beautifully gowned woman coming down the Fifth Avenue. What is that by her side?—a servant out of livery? You conclude that it is a retainer sent out to protect her from gangsters. He has no moustache, and trousers baggy at the knees. But it is her husband. . . . The men can be taught nothing for they are impossible."

Conceivably this last word before leaving New York was the first word of a French mission of fashion to American men. That would be a de-

lightful development. And we should seriously expect it if the denunciation had been uttered by an American business man, for, with his wonderful adaptability, he would undoubtedly have made failure with the women the first step to success with the men. In the land of scientific advertising it is a recognized practice to blow flames out of ashes. But it may be that the Frenchwoman was merely disappointed at discovering in Fifth Avenue the same phenomenon as in the Boulevard des Italiens. To English observers in Paris it always seems strange that such women should belong to such men—the women dressed with that perfection which suggests no excessive elaboration, and yet which no carefulness or thought could improve upon; the men in clothes which bind them closely to their own particular class, and are an index to the position of the women, which but for the men's clothes you could not have guessed. The women are equal to any occasion and any situation both in clothes and in social resource. The men are tethered; and their clothes are the badge of their captivity.

But if the Frenchwoman thinks that

the visible disparity between the clothes of American women and American men betokens some moral or social inferiority in the men, it becomes almost an obligation on Englishmen who know to correct her misapprehension. In the writer's opinion, the American man is superior to the American woman, and if his clothes are bad he can well afford to carry a mere dead-weight of this sort. The American man's indifference to his clothes is a proof of his unselfishness. His business in life is to make money to pay for his wife and daughters. His sons must generally shift for themselves. They must go through the mill; which is a delicate way of saying that they are not worth paying much for as they are, and that they cannot qualify for respect till they have made a little pile of their own—enough to pay handsomely for wife and daughters in the next generation. The American woman has the position of an idol in the house. She has only to exist beautifully to give complete satisfaction. If she is spoiled, she may even then be exacting gracefully. The husband or father will work excessively long hours with a sense of triumph, provided that the money he earns enables the women of his family to make a creditable splash. He does not question the cost of their clothes, or their expenditure on theatres or on dinners at restaurants. Perhaps he does not return to his home early enough to know what the plans for the evening's entertainment are. And he may have gone to bed to rest against the next day's work before the butterflies come back. He idealizes his womenfolk, and puts himself to any pains so long as he believes—like devotees who slash themselves with knives in the temples of their gods—that he is glorifying them. He is content to regard himself as a plain piece of machinery that turns out money so long as he has the

splendid gratification of knowing that his wife or daughter is on the lofty plateau where ethereal beings breathe the rarefied atmosphere of culture. These plateaux, indeed, are "crowded with culture"—as Browning says, and as cultured American women perhaps say with Browning. And there is not only Browning talked of at those heights; there are Ibsen and Hauptmann, and Bergson and Maeterlinck, and Dostoevsky and Gorky. There are lectures up there on Plato, and the American man proudly tells himself that his wife or daughter is "way up" among wonderful women who have learned Latin or Greek at Wellesley, or Smith, or Vassar, while he, poor fellow, is way down—somewhere in the cellars where the properties for these dazzling scenes are manufactured.

*Of course* he does not care about his clothes. He does not wish to enter into any invidious competition. Is he a mere bird, that the male should have the better plumage? He can go for his clothes to London, where even the best tailors' prices are cheap according to American standards; but, then, English clothes are easily distinguishable from American clothes, and he may provoke the old reproach that he is the sort of man who turns his trousers up in New York because it is raining in London. Again, he can have a suit of clothes made to his measure by a first-rate American tailor for sixty dollars. But that, after all, is a lot of money to spend on his own body. He is not a dude. So he buys a suit off the peg for fifteen or twenty dollars—a suit that is turned out from standardized patterns more quickly even than a cheap motor-car—and with a seam let out there and a hitch taken in here it does very well. It is this sort of economy which enables him to pay a hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars for a new gown for his



wife or daughter without turning a hair. It is easy to understand that with such encouragement the New York dressmakers lead the world and have nothing to learn from French visitors. Paris may still be allowed to make casual suggestions in the matter of hats, but even in that business, we suspect, teacher and pupil will soon change places.

The American woman, after a tremendous burst of culture or amusement, frequently collapses into a state of stagnation at an age when she would not yet be reckoned old by English standards. The American man, on his side, having made up his mind to dispense with intellectual and sartorial honors, is remarkable, first, for his optimism, and, secondly, for his business versatility. His optimism and his versatility are only particular ex-

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pressions of his courage. He is never down-hearted. If his business has gone to pot for the time being, he tells himself that his wife will be wearing the best gowns in the city in a year's time. And if he fails utterly and is sold up, he turns to another business with the energy of a boy, and perhaps makes a second fortune quicker than he lost the first. He rides, hunts, and plays games—when he can find time—with the same zest and pluck. He need not bother about his clothes. But you might ask him if the proverb was not true after all—*Vestis virum facit*. "Well," he would probably answer, "my daughter says it means 'Clothes make the man,' and I guess she is not making any error about that. But I reckon the fellow who wrote it ought to have said that they make the woman."

## A SORT OF A WAR.

On a broad view of the Mexican situation there is nothing that need surprise us in President Wilson's resolve to levy a sort of war against General Huerta. In the modern world such anarchy as has prevailed in Mexico since Huerta had Señor Madero murdered and seized the reins of power for himself, usually does provoke the intervention of any powerful neighbor with great financial interests at stake. Dr. Wilson has shown more patience than some of his predecessors would have displayed in the use of the "big stick," and his policy has certainly not been drastic or overbearing, when one judges it by the standard set by European Imperialism. He is doing what Gladstone did in Egypt, what France did in Morocco, what Russia did in Persia. It is only because his handling of some other questions has been so far above the conventional practice of

modern statecraft that one inclines to judge him by a severer standard. He is following the accepted precedents; one had hoped that he would set others. The manner of his intervention is, to our thinking, more questionable than the substance of his policy. On the broad facts of the whole situation there is an arguable case for intervention. There is in Mexico no orderly government, and little prospect of its early establishment. The civil war is being fought with every circumstance of horror, and its conduct on both sides is in the hands of men demoralized by anarchy, who seem anxious rather to prolong a disorder profitable to themselves than to end it in the interests of their cause. The usual aggravations are present, which in such cases are commonly held to justify intervention. Large foreign interests are exposed to heavy losses,

and the rebels have subjected resident foreigners to gross exactions, and in some cases to personal violence, culminating in murder. The Senate has shown a juster sense of the realities of the position in preferring to base the case for the use of force rather on these circumstances than on the trivial "insults" which Dr. Wilson puts forward as the reasons for his action.

Slighter reasons, indeed, have rarely been alleged in history as an excuse for the use of force. The interference with the American bluejackets at Tampico amounted only to half-an-hour's detention. It was the act of a subordinate, for whose folly his superior officer apologized on the spot. By singling out this incident as an excuse for action which amounts to war, by appealing on provocation so slight to the vague and explosive sentiment which clusters round the idea of national honor and prestige, Dr. Wilson has done more to lower the standard of international morality than all his fine utterances in the past have done to raise it. A statesman who intervenes to restore order may argue that at some cost in lives and treasure he is putting an end to intolerable violence and cruelty. But a statesman who sacrifices lives because some ceremonial detail is lacking in the ritual of an apology, is behaving with a levity unworthy of a civilized ruler. This deliberate and needless raising of the point of honor is a lapse into barbaric morals which would be more natural in some Prussian Colonel in an Alsatian garrison than in the humanitarian President of a civilian Republic.

The fact is, of course, that Dr. Wilson had graver reasons for the abandonment of the policy of "watchful waiting" than he alleges in his Message to Congress. The miserable Tampico incident, and the wrangle over the manner in which the flag was to be saluted, may be the singularly

ill-chosen occasion of his intervention, but other considerations have assuredly weighed with him. He had hoped by boycotting Señor Huerta to reduce him to financial straits. That plan has not been a brilliant success, for by one means or another the "Federal" Dictator has contrived to find money, and to replenish his store of ammunition from Europe. Nor has much been gained by allowing the "Constitutionalists" to obtain arms in the United States. General Villa has, indeed, won successes, but his advance is slow, and the prospect that he will ever be able, unaided, to make an end of his opponents, is by no means sure. There is no evidence that General Huerta is winning in the civil war; but, on the other hand, there is little probability of the early collapse which Dr. Wilson seems to have expected. Another order of motives may have influenced, if not Dr. Wilson himself, at least some of those who supply him with facts and make public opinion. The warfare in Mexico had come down at last into the wealthy oil-fields round Tampico and Tuxpan. For our part, while we should deny that any injury to foreign property was an adequate ground for war, we should consider intervention to protect the oil-wells a saner act than intervention to exact some special form of apology for a trivial offence. A single shell, thrown by malice or accident, into one of these oil-wells would possibly destroy millions of pounds worth of property. How far this risk has weighed with the Washington Government we do not know, but certainly it must have influenced some powerful interests which favored the policy of intervention. It would be unprofitable to analyze further the motives which have brought about this momentous reversal of policy. They are at bottom the motives which carried our flag to Egypt. When foreign capital has

once established itself in a weak State, it will always in the end find the means of controlling or coercing the native government.

There seems to be little enthusiasm in the States for the policy of intervention. No man who reflects at all can undertake to limit such action as this. That the two ports of Vera Cruz and Tampico can be seized and held with a loss of life not much greater than has already occurred is quite probable. If this be the extent of the warlike action contemplated by Dr. Wilson, it need be neither costly nor risky. A naval force which cannot move far from its base on ship-board is under little temptation to engage in precarious adventures. The real danger would begin only if an attempt were made to send a military force inland to Mexico City. We see no reason to rate the capacity of the Mexicans in regular warfare very high, and the seizure of the capital might not be an arduous undertaking for a well-founded expeditionary force. The real problem would begin when the capital had fallen. Bazaine, with a French army of a quarter-of-a-million men, found himself impotent in that vast and undeveloped country to overcome the resistance of the guerillas. The real question at issue is whether the occupation of the two Eastern ports will deal to the Huerta *régime* a blow so shrewd and decisive that the Dictator will be compelled to come to terms. Of any issue so simple and fortunate we feel doubtful. The closing of the ports is bound, indeed, to inflict grave inconvenience on him, by stopping his supplies of money and arms. But it is conceivable that this effect may be compensated by moral factors. It looks as if the man who was yesterday an adventurer fighting for his own hand, will to-morrow be the incarnation of the patriotic resistance to foreign invasion and dicta-

tion. There is, in reality, no deep cleavage of principle between most of the combatants in this civil war. Against any move which seems to be the beginning of an American assertion of suzerainty, it is probable that Federalists and Constitutionals will unite. That danger Dr. Wilson has, of course, considered, and it may be less serious than the Mexicans themselves would wish us to believe. It is conceivable that the rebels will push their advantage now, and force their way to Mexico City while their enemy's hands are tied by the loss of his ports. This is a hazardous calculation, however, and it may turn out that Dr. Wilson will have to face, sooner or later, the grave problem of coercing the united Mexican nation. That task would involve the creation of an improvised volunteer army, its employment for months or years in the costly and repugnant work of guerilla warfare, and when the fighting was over, the creation of some permanent system of order and police in an area as vast as the whole of Western Europe.

That Dr. Wilson will make every effort to avoid such a calamity as this we do not doubt. But, unluckily, the Mexicans know that every sane man in the States would regard extreme courses as a calamity. Secure in that knowledge, they may feel themselves strong enough to resist such minor measures of intervention and control as Washington may wish to impose. Washington would prefer not to conquer, but it would like to dictate. The Mexicans may very well feel that they can afford to resist dictation, since conquest is a remote and improbable risk. The case would be much simpler if the Constitutionals had shown themselves more amenable to American influence than their rivals. They have, in fact, shown much less regard for American susceptibilities than General Huerta himself, and this

in spite of the manifest partiality with which Dr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan regarded them. Their success would only create a new order of problems. The future is obscure, and a friendly

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critic can only hope that tact and good luck may enable Dr. Wilson to avoid the graver consequences to which the always to be dreaded policy of Mexican intervention may lead.

## EXILE.

"And how long," said the lady of the house from behind her rampart of breakfast things, "shall you want to be away?"

"Away?" I said. "Who said anything about being away?"

"Well," she said, "if you want to go to all these annual dinners and things you'll have to go to London, and if you go to London you'll have to be away from here."

"Plato," I said, "'thou reasonest well.' Helen, pass me the butter."

"Why deny it, then?" said Helen's mother. "If you're going to be away you're going to be away, and there's an end of it."

"You're wrong there," I said. "There isn't an end of it. I can go away and come back on the same day. By the last train, you know. The last train is intended for that very purpose."

"What very purpose?"

"For coming back by the last train. That's what it's there for. Fathers of families who come back by it sleep in their own beds instead of sleeping in strange beds in clubs or hotels. Let us sing the praises of the last train. Rosie, push over the marmalade, and don't upset the spoon on the tablecloth."

It is not easy to converse with marmalade in one's mouth. I did not make the attempt, so there was a short pause in the argument. It was resumed by the lady of the house.

"You'll lose a lot of sleep, you know," she said. "The last train doesn't get you here till one o'clock in the morning."

"No matter," I said, "I can bear it. The thought of meeting my family at breakfast will sustain me."

"But you never do meet us. After a last train night you're always half-an-hour late, and by that time the girls are gone."

"But you remain," I said. "To see you pouring out coffee is a liberal education in patience."

"But it's tepid coffee."

"I like tepid coffee as a change."

"And the eggs and bacon are cold."

"Pooh!" I said. "There is always the toast."

"And the toast is limp."

"If," I said, "you are so sure of these discomforts why not order me a fresh breakfast?"

"And that," she said, "will make work for the servants."

"Work," I said, "is for the workers. Besides the cook will like me to show an independent spirit."

"The nature of cooks," she said, "is not one of your strong points. No, I am sure you will do better to stay in London."

"But I can give up my dinners," I said.

"And do you think I could ask you to make such a sacrifice? Old friends whom you meet only once a year! Certainly you must go."

"But——"

"If you don't turn up they'll put it down to me, and that wouldn't be fair."

"I don't know," I said, "why you are so keen on my staying in London. There's something behind this—"

something more than meets the eye." "Nonsense," she said, "it's only your comfort; but men never can be reasonable."

"Dad," said Helen to Rosie, "is going to have a holiday given him."

"Yes," said Rosie; "but he doesn't seem to want it very much."

"And it's not going to be a very long one," said Peggy, who generally supports my side of the battle.

"And we'll do his packing," said their mother; "won't we, girls?"

"Hurrah!" said Peggy.

"Peggy," I said, "I am sorry to cast a cold shower on your enthusiasm, but there are limits. You and your mother are great and undeniable packers, but your ways are not my ways."

"Anyhow," said Helen, "we should do it better than Swabey."

"No," I said, "you would do it worse. Swabey has his faults, but I know them. He always forgets white ties and handkerchiefs, but these I can buy, borrow or steal. You would forget white shirts and dress trousers, which mean nothing to you, but are all the world to me. Swabey packs

Punch.

my shaving-brush and my safety razor into my dress shoes, where I come upon them eventually. You would leave them out altogether. I am grateful to you all for your generous offer, but Swabey shall do my packing—that is if I go."

It is unnecessary to say that I went. The dinners were, as usual, a great success. We all became young again in our own eyes, and on the whole I was not sorry to have a bedroom in London. But why had it been forced on me against my will? The reason will appear in a letter from Peggy which I received on the second morning of my compulsory freedom:—

"DEAREST DAD,—We are getting on alright. The maids are now in the library and everything has been put somewhere else. A lot of your papers got blown about, but we ran after them and got most of them. Our meals are in your den. Their going into the dining room directly. The dust is dreadful and the dogs don't like it. It is a spring cleaning with love from your loving

PEGGY."

R. C. L.

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## THE INCOMPARABLE OUIDA.

Miss Elizabeth Lee has collected a number of facts, rumors, appreciations and strictures concerning the novelist who preferred to be known as "Ouida"; the volume also contains certain interesting letters, notably those to the Tauchnitz family, which include some naive confessions of faith in her own supremacy. The author of the memoir has brought considerable industry to bear upon the task, and has quite evidently spent laborious days in its achievement. The biographical details are succinctly stated, and the selection of documents made with prudence if not sympathy; it is

in her attempts to gauge the talents of this remarkable woman that Miss Lee displays a fatal want of apprehension. Lacking vision, she is totally unable to appreciate the essentials of Ouida's genius, its supreme achievements, childish deficiencies.

That a writer can rise to the utmost dignity of passion, and yet remain oblivious to grave defects in construction, ineptitudes of characterization, seems beyond Miss Lee's power to understand. She regrets a lack of balance, deplores the absence of those physiological analyses in which modern fiction specializes and even depre-



cates, almost apologizes, for the bursts of torrential eloquence that sweep across Ouida's work with all the force and freshness of a great spring tide. The author of the memoir appears to take the veil that these passages are "bad form," and that a reticence in the descriptions, a pruning of the passion that recreates sense, sounds and colors, would have been a vast improvement. Ouida saturates her readers with impressions, overwhelms with the glory of color, the sensuousness of sound, the Italian sunshine "that laughs around us nine months of every year, the fruits that grow almost without culture, the flowers that we throw to the oxen to eat, the very stones that are sweet with myrtle, the very sea sand that is musical with bees in the rosemary, everything we grow up amongst from infancy makes our love of nature only a kind of unconscious joy link." Contrast this passage with the novels belonging to the precious school each with its meticulous phrasing, interminable analyses, devitalized men, anæmic women—all very neat, very clever, utterly void of life, and full of the letter that killeth.

It is impossible to judge a writer of Ouida's exceptional gifts and limitations by conventional standards. Romance is the secret of her genius and she shares it with the fairy tales of old. We may smile at her absurdities, cavil at her inaccuracies, but she enchants us none the less, so that for a moment we look at the world with the wide eyes of youth.

The weakness or rather the absence of plot in her stories is immaterial; her crudity of construction is on a level with the stories of our childhood, sharing their defects, and like them, embodying the eternal desires and ambitions of mankind. Her impossible guardsmen, absurd aristocrats, can no more be criticized than the Marquis of Carabas in "Puss in Boots." They

are fairies, demons, grotesques, fabulous creatures, that lend color to the narrative and quicken the spirit of adventure which is the soul of romance.

In those cases where her men and women are human and not of the goblin world, she sketches from type rather than personality. Even as Cinderella, the little kitchen maid, is for all times and for all countries, Ouida's soft-eyed peasants will be no less and no more real fifty years hence than they are to-day. Simple, trustful, full of a passion of loving, and giving, the heroine of "Two Little Wooden Shoes" that idyll fragrant with the scent and memories of spring, could be transferred from Italy to fairyland and lose nothing in the transit.

It is glamour that keeps green the story of Cinderella, it is glamour that animates and vivifies the stories Ouida wrote. It is urged against the novelist that her humor is of the most rudimentary order, that her perspective is distorted, preposterous results arise from inadequate causes, and in the main the contention is true; but if neither limits nor destroys the main-spring of her power, romance exists in her as in the "Arabian Nights," distinct and apart from other qualities, and whether she writes of a preposterous race in which impossible horses win fabulous wagers or paints a picture of peasant life glowing with color, the same quality is there. Ouida possesses the rare gift of seizing upon the essential characteristics of a district as of a type. Throughout "Signa" the scent of the vineyards, the purple of the grapes, the Dionysian joy that descends upon the people when the harvest is gathered, recurs again and yet again, until the atmosphere is saturated with the spirit of the Bacchanalia.

That Ouida was conscious of her defects in technique is more than probable. She was a critic of no mean order, and her appraisal of D'An-

nunzio, whose luxuriance of style did not atone to her for the corruption of his philosophy, suggests a clarity of intellect, a justness of discernment, that Miss Lee is unable to discover. But that she could construct a plot workmanlike, if not original, is shown by "The Masserenes" which attains a fair level of competence that should satisfy her biographer's hunger for exactitude. The fact remains, however, that the novels which most nearly conform to the standard of convention reveal little or nothing of the flame that burns throughout the Ouidaesque romance. They lack the fragrance, the passion, the eloquence, which mark her work as unique, no less than the bizarre effects and amazing dialogue which perpetually recur.

Of the personality of this remarkable woman we have a variety of accounts. That she was extravagant is obvious, that her eccentricities were much exaggerated seems apparent. Ouida had a shrewd mother-wit, and appreciated to the full the value of advertisement. It lent piquancy to her reputation to establish the legend of an eternal toilet of white satin and her *entourage* of dogs undoubtedly kept the paragraphist busy. Her remarks to Tauchnitz concerning her "great successes" hardly argue an exalted opinion of her talent so much as the recognition of the fact that it is desirable when dealing with a buyer to boom your own wares.

Her career as a pamphleteer is characterized with the same qualities

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that mark her as a novelist. Lack of proportion made her attack a pigmy with the same virulent energy she devoted to assaulting a giant, but if her energy was at times misdirected her political instinct was rarely at fault. She had the faculty of appraising the situation, seeing the reality of things independent of surrounding circumstance. A pro-Boer at the time of the war with the Transvaal on the ground of her sympathy with nationality, for the same reason she was anti-Dreyfus, fearing that were the Dreyfusards to triumph it might endanger the integrity of France.

Miss Lee touches little on this side of Ouida, whose political activity seems to inspire the same dubiety roused by her novels.

But it is in her comment on the inscription carved on Ouida's tomb that Miss Lee reveals the full extent of her inability to understand the spring from which welled up those wonderful romances. "Exaggeration pursued Ouida to the end," she says. "For the inscription commemorates her as 'a writer of incomparable novels.'" Therein must surely lie the justification of this arresting and provocative personality. Touched with divine fire she was at once an artist and a child, a great romancer and a bad craftsman, a law unto herself, beyond, or if you will, below conventional criticism, her novels like herself are in very truth utterly, hopelessly, triumphantly incomparable.

J. K. Prothero.

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## BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

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The gentle art of sugar-coating has been well mastered by Margaret Williamson, who adds a volume descriptive of "John and Betty's Irish History

Visit" to earlier volumes relating to English and Scotch history visits made by the same two young people. Miss Williamson contrives to give the

interest of a pleasing story to the experiences of John and his sister, at the same time that she weaves in a great deal of history and legend and description. Boy and girl readers will be beguiled by the interest of the story, merely as a story, while they are incidentally absorbing much that is worth knowing about the past and the present of Ireland. Twenty or thirty illustrations from photographs add to the interest of the book. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.

The unique and distinguishing feature of the "Children of Other Lands" books, published by the Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company, is that each volume is written, not by a mere tourist or observer, but by a native of the country described who has actually lived the child life which is pictured. The latest volume "When I Was a Boy in Palestine," is by Mousa J. Kaleel, who was born within ten miles of Jerusalem about twenty years ago, and lived there amid the scenes and under the conditions which he describes until he was sixteen. He enters minutely into his boy life, tells of his experiences at home and in school, and compares the life and customs of the people of Palestine to-day with those of Bible times. Altogether, the book is one of unusual vividness and interest. There are a dozen illustrations from photographs.

John L. Stoddard, the well-known American traveller and lecturer,—now for years a resident abroad—has gathered into an attractive volume the Poems, with the writing of which he has beguiled his leisure, and in which he has expressed many emotions and experiences. (George L. Shuman & Co.) Several poems are tributary to the memory of the great Napoleon. Coming upon "Corsica" in the early pages, one expects "Fontainebleau" and

discovers it, and also an address "To the Portrait of Napoleon,"—the one painted by Andrea Appiani in 1803. It might be feared that Mr. Stoddard loves a fighter. But he loves also a gentle, harmless minstrel like him whom he celebrates in "Farewell to the Faun" and a faithful dumb beast like "Leo." To his garden fair as he walks to and fro in his "Promenade Solitaire" he summons no ugly object. When he deals with the great mysteries of life and death, with the unfathomable, insoluble questions that come in visions of the night, he is at his best. The book is dedicated to "Conjugi Carissimæ." In a modest "Proem" the author tells of a poor, mad fiddler whose bow is loosened by his friends, and intimates a fear that he himself draws a silent bow. On the contrary, there is much music in his verse.

In Tasuku Harada's "The Faith of Japan" (The Macmillan Co.) we have the most important volume in the series to which it belongs,—the Hartford-Lamson Lectures on the Religions of the World—and this for the reason that it gives no outside and superficial view, but the observations and conclusions of a native Japanese. The author is President of Doshisha University of Kyoto, and he gave the substance of this volume in a series of lectures upon the Lamson foundation, at Hartford Theological Seminary. As he explains in the opening lecture, he has in mind, by the Faith of Japan, not Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism or Christianity, but the union of elements from each and all that have taken root in Japanese soil and moulded the life and thought of her people. Beginning with an historical sketch, he goes on to outline the various religious conceptions which have appealed to the Japanese mind and closes by pointing out some of the dif-

difficulties which must be encountered by Christian teachers and missionaries in the Empire. As an interpretation of the Japanese mind and temper touching serious things, the book is at once sympathetic and authoritative.

"Her Ladyship's Conscience," by Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, is primarily a book of clever epigrams. The author and her characters combine to ring the changes, after the manner of Oscar Wilde, on "daughter," "mother," "man," "woman," "husband," "wife," "he," and "she," with the dexterity of an intricate machine. When the characters are not delivering epigrams, they are engaged in equally witty, though less formal, conversation; and when the author has a gap to fill she does it with very clever analyses of thoughts and motives. After cleverness come Aristocracy and Religion as motifs for the story. It abounds with Dukes and Earls, novelized apparently, like successful plays, not because they are expected to make good novels but because the public has become deeply interested in them. And in spite of the intense seriousness of the religious paragraphs, it is difficult not to feel that their capital Gs, Hs, and Ws belong to the same hierarchy as the Ds and Es of the rest of the book. Yet after all, it is a good story, clear-cut, well-told, full of suspense, built around well-defined, carefully-studied people,—the story of a woman of forty who forces her young lover to give her up and marry youth and beauty instead and lives to regret it. If the people had only been allowed to be more individual and less often "one of the few women who," or "like most men who," or "like other women of her type" they might have been lovable as well as extremely interesting; and the denouement, an automobile accident (fortunate from every point of view except

those of the victim and of art) which finally unites the right couple, might have been saved from falling rather flat. George H. Doran Co.

Dr. Hudson Stuck's "The Ascent of Denali" makes mountain-climbing seem like child's play, but it is very modest, and the author's chief concern seems to be to remove the names of McKinley and Foraker from the twin peaks, and to fix the Indian substitutes "Denali and Denali's Wife" upon them. His second anxiety appears to be to thank his bishop, the Rev. Peter Trimble Rowe, for giving him leave of absence to make his perilous journey. Those things being done, he strives to show that he was only one of a company and mentions the names of Mr. Harry Karstens, the "real leader of the expedition"; of Mr. Robert G. Tatum, who "took his share and more than his share of all trial and hardship and was a most valuable colleague"; of Walter Harper, who "joyed in the heights as a mountain sheep or a chamols, and whose broad shoulders were never weary or unwilling." Even Johnny, the Indian boy who kept the camp during a long vigil, must be commemorated. The author makes light of his own sufferings but he does not conceal them, nor try to make them seem romantic or poetic. This quality is so conspicuous that it should not for a moment be forgotten. If there be "within this land ten thousand good as he" a chance to do homage to a hero does not come every day. But to leave praise, here is a handsome octavo of nearly two hundred pages with thirty-six illustrations and a map and there is not one gloomy word in it. The pictures are terrifying; the text is invigorating. Arctic exploration must resume the place which it lost for a brief space while an unfortunate affair was remembered, and the Episcopal church should be proud of its sons. The peril

of avalanches occupies much space in the narrative and some other dangers not yet become trite are thrillingly set forth. Nobody can tell a story better. Charles Scribner's Sons.

The paper "jacket" of "The Vanguard," by Edgar Beecher Bronson, calls it "a novel"; yet in form it is pure autobiography, a long string of the reminiscences of an old scout and guarder of stage-coaches who began his active life as a wielder of deadly weapons early in the '50's and left it only at the end of the century. Its only plot is the love interest between hero and heroine, and they part in their teens in the first chapter and never see or hear anything of each other until they marry in the last,—at seventy-one and sixty-nine respectively! Much of its peculiar value lies in the remoteness of the rough, straightforward simplicity with which the old man tells his story from the artifices of what he calls "the fancy quill drivers." Blood flows as freely and as simply as whiskey. There are no sentimental rhapsodies over its redness; no beatings of the chest over the quantities,—either of his own or of other peoples',—which a strong man may safely spill; none of the chief stock in trade of the modern school of passionate primitives. Bronco-busters, bandits, gamblers, tenderfeet, Mexicans and Indians are simply brought on the scene in rapid succession to be coolly and calmly shot down before they can reach the next page. It is not a book for the squeamish, but after the feverishness of most of our elemental fiction it is cool and refreshing. And as an impressionistic panorama of the opening up of the country west of the Mississippi it serves to bridge the gap between the broad, impersonal treatment of history and the necessarily limited point of view of ordinary fiction. George H. Doran Co.

If the reader of Maravene Thompson's "The Woman's Law" (Frederick A. Stokes Co.) can accept the initial improbability on which the story is based, he need not be staggered by anything that follows. A woman's husband comes home with the startling announcement that he has just killed a man in a quarrel over another woman. The woman, though she has been estranged from her husband, is anxious to save him, for the sake of their boy. Some one had told her that it was possible to find the exact double of any one within a few blocks. She conceals her husband behind some tapestry and goes out in her car down Broadway to find his double. She has not ridden far before she comes upon the very duplicate of the man whom she has left shivering behind the tapestry, in dread of arrest. She beckons him into the limousine,—the chauffeur being so absorbed in the street traffic that he does not notice anything—and begins to urge him to help her, when she finds that he is in a kind of mental daze and does not know either who he is or where he is. Hurrying home with him, it is a simple matter for the husband to exchange clothes with him, and to leave him, helpless and apparently intoxicated, to be gathered in by the police when they finally get around. The real murderer easily escapes; while his double is adjudged insane and sent to an asylum. But, to the surprise and embarrassment of the wife, he is returned as cured within a few months, but with his mind a perfect blank as to his identity and all of his past. Naturally, there are a good many complications and a slowly maturing romance, and eventually the real husband dies in his far-off hiding-place just in time to permit his double, whose mind and memory meanwhile have come back to him, to take his place for good.